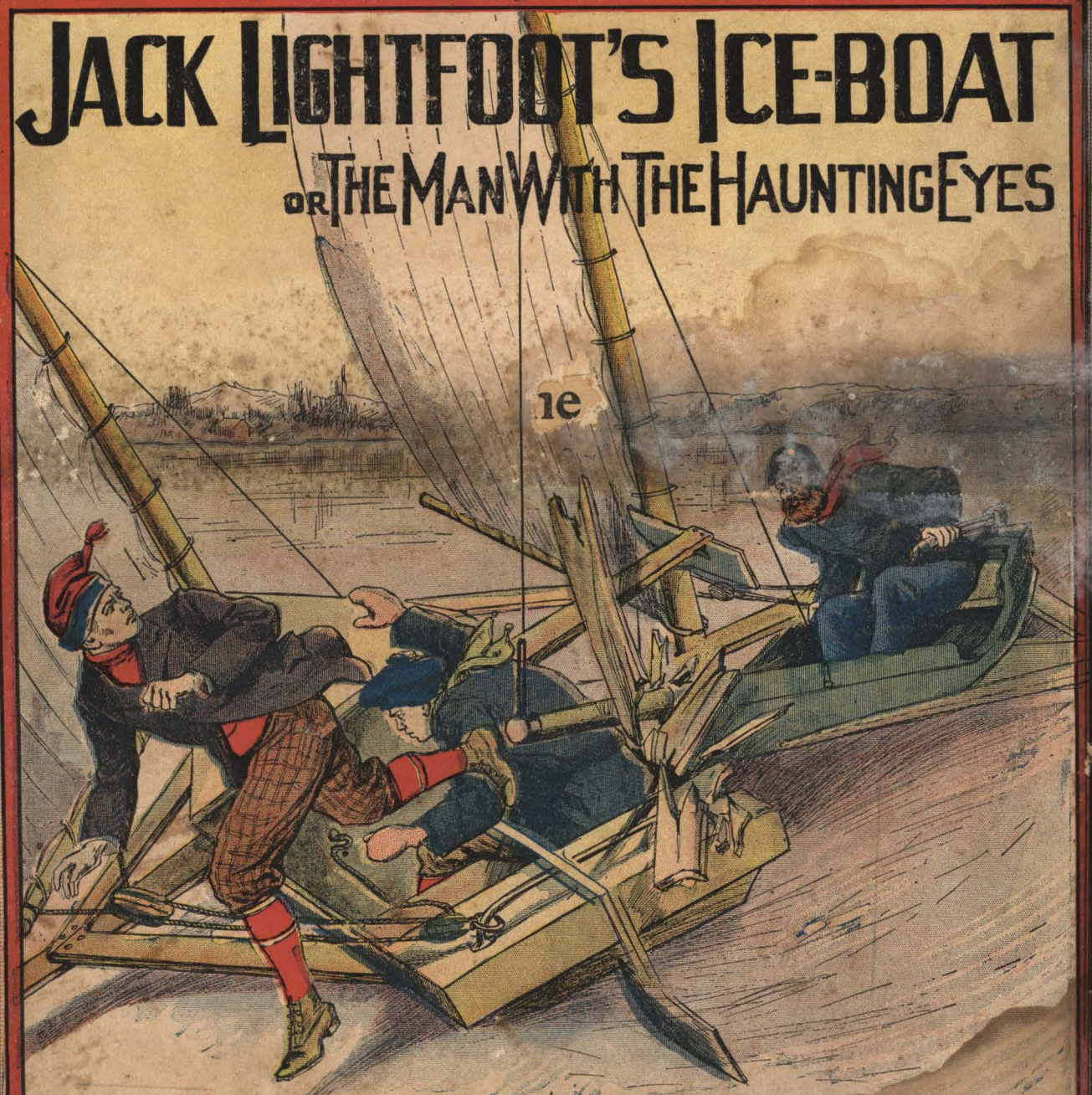
No. 56 5 CENTS

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JACK LIGHTFOOT'S ICE-BOAT

OR THE MAN WITH THE HAUNTING EYES



BY MAURICE STEVENS

The heavier boat, guided by the man with the haunting eyes, crashed into Jack's, and Jack barely escaped death by a wild leap into the air.

Publishers' Note. "Teach the American boy how to become an athlete, and lay the foundation for a Constitution greater than that of the United States."—Wise sayings from "Tip Top." There has never been a time when the boys of this great country took so keen an interest in all manly and health-giving sports as they do to-day. As proof of this witness the record-breaking throngs that attend college struggles on the gridiron, as well as athletic and baseball games, and other tests of endurance and skill. In a multitude of other channels this love for the "life strenuous" is making itself manifest, so that, as a nation, we are rapidly forging to the front as seekers of honest sport. Recognizing this "handwriting on the wall," we have concluded that the time has arrived to give this vast army of young enthusiasts a publication devoted exclusively to invigorating out-door life. We feel we are justified in anticipating a warm response from our sturdy American boys, who are sure to revel in the stirring phases of sport and adventure, through which our characters pass from week to week.

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JACK LIGHTFOOT'S ICE-BOAT;

OR,

The Man With the Haunting Eyes.

By MAURICE STEVENS

CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

Jack Lightfoot, who after proving himself to be the best all-round athlete in Cranford or vicinity, and a natural leader, had come to Seagirt to enter the academy there, with the intention of fitting himself for college. Jack was a lad clear of eye, clean of speech, and, after he had conquered a few of his faults, possessed a faculty for *doing things* while others were talking, that by degrees caused him to be looked upon as the natural leader in all the sports Young America delights in—a boy who, in learning to conquer himself put the power into his hands to wrest victory from others.

Tom Lightfoot, Jack's cousin, a steady, reliable friend in time of need.

Lafe Lampton, a big, hulking chap, with an ever present craving for something to eat. Lafe always had his appetite along, and proved himself Jack's loyal friend through thick and thin. He could also do a few other "stunts" besides eat, as the reader may soon discover.

Professor Phineas Chubb, principal of Seagirt Academy, a fat, pompous man.

Professor Titus Lazenby, his chief assistant, called Professor "Dry-as-Dust."

Professor Conquest, a teacher of mathematics at Seagirt.

Jubal Marlin, a schoolboy friend of Jack's from Cranford.

Kid Kennedy, Jack's most bitter enemy at the school, and a bully.

Reel Snodgrass, an old-time foe from Cranford.

Boralmo, the man from India, given to dark tricks and magic.

Kitty Percival, a pretty lass whom Jack once saved from a train on a high trestle.

Sid. Percival, Julian Glaze, Lee Willis, scholars at the academy.

CHAPTER I.

FUN IN THE LECTURE-ROOM.

Professor Conquest stood up in the lecture-room, with his back to his desk and the wall, and looked out over the class. His right hand was thrust into the bosom of his black frock coat, which was well buttoned up in front. The other hand rested on the corner of the table.

Jack Lightfoot was seated with the other students, and looked earnestly at the professor, as the latter rose before the class.

Jack had come to like the erratic man, whose yearning and enthusiasm were undoubted. Conquest was professor of chemistry and physics, and he could do more strange things with a few liquids and a glass bottle or two than many a wizard of the stage.

As for his personal appearance, Conquest was rather tall and shambling. His eyes were a light blue; his hair of a faded dust color. He wore his hair long, and at times forgot to give it proper attention with comb and brush, to judge by its tangled looks. It stood up now in a tangle, and fell loosely down over his high, broad brow.

Conquest's blue eyes were kindly, but they had an absent, abstracted gaze. Just now he seemed to be looking at the opposite ceiling, rather than at the lively and earnest young fellows before him.

Some of the students took advantage of Conquest's absentmindedness at times, and prodded each other with pins, shot paper wads across the room, or pinched the legs of some studious fellow who was trying to get all he could out of the professor's lecture.

On the desks before the students were pads of paper and pencils; and when Conquest talked, or experimented, or explained things intricate and strange, they jotted down notes of the lecture on the paper, with the references he gave to the books where these things were to be found at length.

Conquest—Jack even yet was not quite sure of the professor's first name, but thought it was Columbus—was an inventor of considerable distinction and rare enthusiasm.

He had gotten up a bill of fare by which a student, if so disposed, could live well for a whole week on much less than a dollar of expense; and he had invented a cooking-stove of sheet-iron, heated by a lamp, with which the student could cook for himself the things that small sum would purchase.

The boys said that Conquest used this bill of fare himself and did his own cooking, which was the reason why he looked so thin and gaunt, and his face showed so white at times.

Others declared his appearance was wholly due to the fact that when he became absorbed in some line of investigation he forgot to eat at all, and even forgot to sleep, until he had explored to the bottom of the thing that interested him or troubled him.

Professor Conquest lived alone, in a room close to his laboratory, and had for a companion only a big black cat, from whose fur he combed electricity when the students called on him there. With that cat on his lap and his tongue going the student could learn from Conquest more strange things about electricity and kindred subjects than he could have found in many volumes.

"When Columbus discovered," began the professor, beetling his brows and staring at the opposite wall, as he commenced his lecture.

R-ring-g-g! Ding-ing-g!

The professor's alarm-clock, ticking on the table beside him, had started up suddenly and furiously.

It was as plain an "Oh, ring off!" as if the alarm-lock had been given a human tongue and had said the ords.

A gale of laughter swept through the lecture-room. "Ha, has," "te-hees," and outright explosions of hilarity rose on the air.

Jack pulled a book up before his face to hide the laughter he could not suppress.

Conquest was annoyed.

For an instant it seemed that he meant to strike the offending clock from the table.

He tried to speak, but the din of the clock and the laughter of the students prevented.

The clock rang itself down and out, and stopped.

The suppressed laughter of the students continued.

"When Columbus discovered——"

Ring-ing-ing-ing-ng-g!

The professor flushed a fiery, angry red.

Another alarm-clock was telling him to "Ring off!" from a far corner of the room, and he had not known this second clock was there.

Ring—ding-ing-ing-ng-g!

The second clock was louder and more strident than the first, and its clamor rose deafeningly.

Conquest looked about with a frown, and ran his fingers nervously through his touseled hair.

He thought he understood the situation and the insinuation, and he was not pleased.

"Some student has——"

Conquest got no further.

On the table by him, and on the floor behind him, and all along the wall, there were numbers of bottles. These contained various chemicals, or had contained various chemicals, whose nature he knew. He experimented before the class in chemistry with them almost daily.

But now these bottles seemed to be as insane as the alarm-clocks.

One near the professor's hand, which still rested on the corner of the table, blew its cork out with a violent noise, shooting the cork up against the ceiling, from which it bounced back, striking Conquest on top of the head.

Other bottles on the table began to hiss and fizz, and so did those along the wall; and then they began to blow their corks out, like seltzer or soda bottles, shooting the corks about the room and against the walls, while the contents of the bottles began to fizz and sputter and spatter over the room.

It was as if a battery of light artillery had begun to let loose indiscriminately.

The bottles on the table threw their corks at the professor and at the ceiling, and the stuff with which they were filled was thrown over his coat and hand.

A big bottle near the wall overturned itself and shot its cork out into the room.

Jack saw it coming and dodged behind his book, which it struck with a resounding whack.

Other bottles were conducting themselves much in the same way, and corks, like bullets, were flying and rolling over the room and the floor.

Professor Conquest's face grew a beet red.

He knew that at times he was tiresome and prosy. But he did not consider that even this justified any student or students in playing this trick.

Some one, and perhaps several, had been engaged in it, and had reached the lecture-room ahead of him that morning. They had set his alarm-clock to go off during the lecture hour; and the second clock, which they had brought in, they had set to go off in the same way and at about the same time.

In addition, they had emptied the bottles of their regular contents, and had filled them with some fermenting substance, intending that the active fermentation should cause the bottles to blow their corks out or explode during the hour of the lecture.

The whole thing was clear.

Who were the culprits?

Conquest, his face as red as fire now, looked at the laughing students. Every one was laughing, even Tom Lightfoot, who usually managed to keep a straight face on every occasion where a straight face was needed. Jack Lightfoot was doubled up with laughter, and so was Lafe Lampton. Jubal Marlin was roaring, and as red in the face as Conquest himself.

The bottles were still exploding and fizzing, and dancing about, as if inhabited by little devils; and the floor

was deluged with some frothing substance that resembled soda or seltzer.

The table was also covered with it. Conquest rescued a book which was about to be drowned on the table, and saw that its binding and some of the pages were already soaked.

"Young gentlemen," he began again; but stopped, when one of the flying corks hit him in the ear.

He looked about angrily; then dodged and put up a hand to protect his face as another cork was shot at him.

In his sudden indignation he wanted to rush at those exploding bottles and "kick them into the middle of next week."

He would not do anything so undignified.

"Young gentlemen," he said—and it was comical to see him throw up his hand as if he thought another cork was coming—"gentlemen, this is—is an outrage, whoever perpetrated it! Chemistry is a grand science, but——"

Biff!

A cork struck him, carrying with it a stream of the liquid, which was showered on his head.

The foamy liquid began to run down through his hair and trickle from the end of his nose.

Jubal now rolled, roaring, out of his seat to the floor, and lay there kicking, unable to restrain his mirth.

Jack doubled closer behind his book, from which he looked at intervals.

"Gentlemen," said Conquest, digging out his handkerchief and beginning to mop the stuff from his nose and his hair, "this is—this is——"

He turned toward the door, staring.

Some singular creature, like a little man, had come in at the door, and was hopping up the aisle.

Conquest stared, and forgot to wipe his nose, but stood with the handkerchief in his hand.

Jack turned to look, and saw a monkey, dressed up in red, with a red hat that held a bright green feather.

It carried the hat in one of its hands, and hopped along on its two hind limbs and that other hand, twisting its face comically and looking at the fellows whose attention was being drawn.

This was the first of March. Snow lay on the ground and ice on the lake; yet here was this monkey, come from, no one could guess where.

Conquest expected to see the dark face of its Italian owner in the doorway behind it.

Leaving the desk where he stood, and disregarding the bottles that were still popping behind him, he stepped toward the door, flourishing his handkerchief and dabbing it against his nose and hair and against the back of his neck, down which that liquid was now trickling.

Jack twisted round in his seat and saw him approach the monkey, which squealed and made a jump toward the radiator by the wall.

The monkey landed on top of the radiator, which was hot, and it squealed again when it felt the heat; and then hopped to the window-ledge above the radiator.

Conquest stared at it, as if wondering if this monkey could be the author of the singular disturbance which had taken place in the class-room; and then walked on toward the door, which was half ajar.

He looked from the door, and then stepped out into the hall, and from that walked on to the other door, finding it also slightly ajar; and then he looked out into the yard.

No Italian owner of the monkey was to be seen.

When the professor returned he was puzzled, and that helped to drive from his mind the anger he had felt.

But the flood of memory came like a tide again when he returned to the room and beheld the wet floor and spattered table and walls. The platform where he usually stood when he lectured was a sloppy sea of froth that might have come from a soapy wash-tub.

One lone bottle, the last of that gallant battery of cork artillery, exploded loudly as he reentered the room.

It sounded like a welcoming salute of one gun.

The students had tried to turn back into their seats and assume their ordinary air. The attempt was a failure. They could not keep from looking at the monkey and casting amused glances at the professor.

Conquest stopped in the middle of the floor and ran his fingers through his touseled hair, stirring it up until, as Jubal said afterward, "it stood seven ways for Sunday."

He stared at the monkey; and the monkey, with an angry chatter, stared back.

Titters of amusement ran through the student ranks.

Conquest stepped toward the monkey now.

He was really a kind-hearted man.

"Poor little thing!" he said, as he saw how it hovered on the window-ledge close by the radiator. "It's cold! This is no time of year for a monkey to be out of doors."

He held out his hand in a friendly way.

The monkey growled, and its gray eyes glared suspicion.

He came nearer to it, still holding out his hand.

The monkey "grr-r-rd!" in a manner to amuse the students.

"Poor thing!" he said. "I wonder where it came from?"

Already he was forgetting all but the monkey. It was one of his mental peculiarities. It was this same mental peculiarity which made him forget to eat and to sleep when he became absorbed in some invention or new line of study.

"Poor thing!" he exclaimed.

"Grr-r-r-r!" said the monkey, bristling the hair on its head in a way to fairly push its feather cap off.

CHAPTER II.

THE PROFESSOR AND THE MONKEY.

Professor Columbus Conquest was never a man of caution or judicious bravery. He approached nearer and nearer to the monkey. He held out his hand, stretching it forth with his body bent.

"You poor thing!" he said softly. "Where did you come from?"

"Gug-gur-r-r-r!" was the answer.

"Oh, I wouldn't hurt you for the world? Did you escape from your master?"

"Grrr-r-r!"

"You're actually shivering with cold!"

The monkey shifted nervously on the window-ledge, its little gray eyes regarding him furtively.

Jack and all the students were watching this little drama with the most intense interest.

They were as much puzzled by the strange coming of the monkey as the professor was. And they, too, expected the quick appearance of the Italian who was

naturally supposed to accompany the monkey. In this land of the free and home of the brave, when we see a dressed-up monkey on the streets or in any strange place we look for the Italian who is sure to be with him or near him. It may be the man is a Spaniard or a Portuguese, a Greek or an Armenian, nevertheless, we think of him as an Italian, and we call him an Italian. An Italian organ-grinder and a dressed-up monkey—are not these inseparable in our minds?

So Jack and all the other students watched the professor and the growling monkey, and at the same time cast glances toward the door, where the owner of the monkey was momentarily expected to show himself.

"You poor dear!" said the kind-hearted professor.

"Grr-r-r-r!" sounded the monkey again, shifting uneasily on the window-ledge.

The professor's hand went out farther.

He was about to stroke the monkey as if it were a stray kitten.

"Gur-r-r-r!"

The warning rose louder.

The professor's hand was almost against its face.

Then——

"Gur-rur-rr-rr-rr—raow-r-r!"

The monkey became a flash of light; it leaped with the agility of a circus athlete; and as it landed squarely on the professor's tangled head of hair and began to claw there, the roar of pain and surprise which bellowed from the professor filled the room like the burst of a cyclone.

Excited ejaculations rose from the students.

Jack Lightfoot slid into the aisle.

Professor Conquest tried to remove the clawing little fury of a beast from his hair, and was clawed and bitten until he roared with pain.

"Take the thing off!" he shouted.

Jack leaped to his assistance.

There was danger that the sharp claws of the monkey would be transferred to Jack.

On the table was a pitcher of water and a glass. Conquest stopped for a drink of water often in the course of his lectures, and always had water on his lecture-table.

Jack jumped for the water-pitcher, and showered the contents on the monkey.

The professor and the monkey were down on the floor by this time, and from the howls of the professor it became apparent that he was getting the worse of it.

The monkey seemed to be tearing his dusty hair out by handfuls.

After dashing the water on the monkey, Jack slipped out of his coat and tried to throw it round the monkey's body and head.

He succeeded well enough. He did not smother the monkey; but was able to cover it with the coat and then seize it and pull it off the professor, who lay writhing and kicking on the floor.

Of course the lecture-room was in a tumult.

Every student had left his seat, and they were crowding round the man and the monkey and Jack, tiptoeing, shouting, and calling, some of them laughing.

Then another roar of surprise and bewilderment arose.

Jack had snatched the coat-wrapped monkey from the professor and had flung it toward the window; but in doing it a strange change had been brought to Professor Conquest.

The monkey's claws had not been released from the professor's tangled hair—they had taken the hair along!

The professor, as he tried now to rise from the floor, showed a head as bare and bald as a billiard-cue.

That touseled head of hair was false, and it had come away in the monkey's hands.

The monkey flounced out of Jack Lightfoot's coat and flew for the window-ledge above the radiator, but it clung to that head of hair—that wig.

It looked at it, and at the bald head of the man rising from the floor, and chattered and "gur-rr-ed" as if it could not understand this strange thing.

Jack picked up his coat, which the monkey had let fall, and began to put it on, at the same time approaching the professor.

Tom Lightfoot was ahead of him, and was helping the bewildered man to his feet.

Conquest glared at the monkey, and saw his wig of tangled hair in its claws. It was pulling at the hair.

He put his hand to his white, bald head and groaned.

"The class is dismissed!" he said dispiritedly. "There will be no lecture to-day."

Tom steadied him on his feet in the midst of the clamor.

Jack, glancing round the room in this moment of excitement, caught sight of the face of Kid Kennedy.

There was a grin of triumph on Kennedy's face that caused Jack to look at it again.

"Kennedy knows more about this than he'd want anybody to think," was Jack's guess.

"Can I help you, sir?" he said, addressing the bewildered professor.

"If you could—er—get that—er—that wig for me, I'd be obliged to you."

Jack had showered the monkey with the water from the pitcher, and the monkey's head and clothing dripped that water now, and the silky green feather of its cap was limp and wet.

"I'll try to get it," he answered the professor.

"Help me to my chair," Conquest urged of Tom.

Tom and Lafe assisted the professor to his chair at the desk.

As he dropped into that familiar seat Conquest looked over the room and groaned again, and put his hand to his bald pate.

Such wreck and ruin as met his eyes! Corks and overturned and broken bottles lay all about. And the frothy spume of that liquid, whatever it was that had been in the bottles, was everywhere.

Worst of all, to the professor, was the exposure of the fact that he was bald and wore a wig.

One of his small vanities had been that he had a good head of hair. He had delighted in running his fingers through it, standing it up effectively, as he talked of the mysteries of chemical affinities or of the strange properties of matter.

And now he was exposed, shorn of his hair, like Samson, and he knew that the students who had left the room, and the crowd of them that stayed, were laughing at him, every one.

He glanced at the monkey.

Where had that mischief-making beast come from?

It had exposed his baldness; and it still clung to that wig, picking at the hair, making it more tangled, and chattering angrily if any one came near it.

Its own feathered cap had dropped to the floor.

Conquest now saw Jack Lightfoot stoop with quick motion and grab up the feathered cap.

Then he stared, for Jack was doing what seemed a strange thing—he seemed to be bargaining with the monkey—offering it the cap in return for the wig.

Professor Conquest became so interested in this that he stood up to see better, bending forward from his platform as he watched.

He had lectured more than once on a subject which included as one of its branches the difference between reason and instinct. He would have said that a monkey had instinct, but not reason.

So he stood up and looked.

The monkey seemed to have very little sense of any kind just then.

It stood half erect, glaring with its little gray eyes, and making that strange sound which I have tried to spell—"grr-r-r!" and it held tight to the wig.

It looked at the sea of faces closing about it.

These, apparently in its opinion, were faces of enemies. At any rate, not being monkeys, they seemed to the little monkey to be the faces of foes.

Professor Conquest almost forgot that it was his wig which the monkey was tearing, and that his head now lay bare to the sight of all men. Here was an interesting study; he would watch it.

So he ran his hand over his bare head, and forgot all else as he watched that "dicker" which Jack Lightfoot was trying.

Jack extended the feathered monkey cap and made motions with his hands, indicating as well as he could that he would swap the cap for the wig.

The monkey "grr-r-rd!" and chattered, shifting back and forth on the ledge.

Jack made his motions again—and put the cap on his own head, trying to show the monkey what he meant.

He used words, too, but he did not suppose the monkey understood them.

Trying to imitate Jack's example in putting the feathered cap on his head—and Jack was a funny sight when he did that, too!—the monkey now put the wig on its own head; with the result that the wig fell down over its head, burying it almost from sight.

Jack leaped with the lightness of a deer and the quickness of thought; and before the monkey could get out from under that hairy wig, Jack had snatched the headgear away.

The monkey growled and chattered angrily, when it saw the wig in Jack's hand. For an instant it seemed that it would attack Jack, as it had the professor, and give him something to do and to remember.

Jack checked this apparent intention by tossing the feathered red cap to the monkey.

And the monkey, pleased to get its red cap back, seemed to forget that Jack had deprived it of the wig, and set the cap on its head.

But when Jack tried to get near it, for the purpose of showing it that these were friends rather than enemies, the monkey backed against the window and growled menacingly.

"A clever boy! A clever boy!" said Professor Conquest. "But I wish he could have gone on with that experiment. It might have shown that a monkey can reason. I should have liked to see the result, and know whether a monkey can be induced to make an exchange—a trade. It didn't, in this instance, but it seemed that it might have, if the experiment had been pushed. I could have incorporated it in my lecture. I shall have to make a note of this—it is most interesting."

The professor took a thick note-book from his inner coat pocket, pulled a pencil from another pocket, and proceeded to make his entry of the discovery, that it seemed probable that a monkey would give one thing in exchange for another, showing thus the first rudiments of that instinct which in man has led to all the vast ramifications of trade and commerce.

The professor might have gone on adding to his notes, setting down the observation that trade led to civilization, and to the discovery of strange lands, and other things, if Jack Lightfoot had not approached and spoken to him.

Professor Conquest raised his eyes from his note-book.

He saw Jack before him, and he saw in Jack's hand the battered and tattered wig.

Behind Jack he observed the other students. Most of them were laughing, though Jack's face was as grave as an undertaker's at a funeral.

A great wave of confusion swept over the professor as he was thus drawn back to the fact that he had lost his wig and that his baldness had been exposed to these students.

"Yes, sir; thank you, sir!" he said, trembling.

And then in his confusion he clapped the wig awkwardly on top of his head, and it stood up in every direction, like the "fright wig" of a negro minstrel. The condition in which the monkey had left that wig made it certainly a sight.

Even now Jack Lightfoot did not laugh.

He had laughed uproariously awhile before, but now he had got control of himself.

"Yes, sir; thank you, sir!" said Conquest, in confusion.

He looked beyond Jack, at the grinning students who daily listened to his lectures.

"There will be no lecture to-day!" he announced, recalled to the duty of the moment. "You are dismissed; and it will please me if you will go out very quietly."

He rose to his feet, his "fright wig" standing up like the quills upon the fretful porcupine, and tapped the note-book he held in his hand, striking it sharply with his pencil.

"There has been much unruliness here to-day, and—and—many things that have been unpleasant and distasteful, which have annoyed me and made me ashamed for you!"

Unthoughtfully he ran his fingers through his "fright wig" hair.

"The alarm-clocks, the exploding bottles, and this—this monkey, that has come here so strangely and has torn my—I mean has come here strangely!"

He flushed again, thinking of the disclosure of his bald pate.

Then he sat down.

"Young gentlemen, there will be no lecture to-day; good day!"

CHAPTER III.

WHAT FOLLOWED.

You may imagine, if you can, with what interest and excitement, and with what merriment and laughter, the incidents set down here were commented on by the students as they left the lecture-room for the dormitories and the campus.

Jack Lightfoot had seen something in Kid Kennedy's face which told him that Kid was concerned in the clock-and-bottle part of the performance, but Jack did not believe that Kid had known of the coming of the monkey until it was there in the room.

He had seen a look of surprise on Kid's dark face which would hardly have shone there if he had been aware that the monkey was to appear.

And now, as Jack left the lecture-room, walking with his chums from Cranford, they began to talk of all that had happened.

Jubal was bubbling with hilarity, and Lafe slouched along with his hands, as usual, in his pockets.

"By gum! but I'd like tew know who set off them alarm-clocks and worked the sody-water trick on them bottles!" said Jubal. "It was a great trick, and paowerful funny, whoever done it."

"I think Kid had something to do with it," said Jack, speaking to Tom more than to the others.

"It'd be abaout like him," averred Jubal.

"The only thing that troubles me," remarked Tom, "is that we may get dragged into it."

"We had nothin' tew do with it."

"It may be claimed that we had."

"That absent-minded professor will forget about it before night, and go off on some new tack," said Lafe. "He'll never push the thing!"

"Wow! that bald head!" said Jubal. "That made me think of the story o' the surprised Indian. Jever hear it? The Indian got the white man daown, and grabbed his hair tew scalp him, when the white man's wig come off in the Indian's hands. That was so surprisin' a thing that he jumped up and run—I mean the Indian jumped up and run—lettin' the white man go. By jacks! I've heard that was a true story, and now I'm ready tew believe it! Did yeou ever see anything like that bald head? There wasn't a spear of hair on it. Bare as the pa'm o' my hand. If yeou want to disguise yerself successfully, keep yer head shaved close and wear a wig. Then when yeou don't want people tew know who ye air, jest take off the wig; yeou won't need any other disguise. Why, if that professor had looked at hisself in a lookin'-glass he'd 'a' throwed a fit."

As they stopped before the door that led to the dormitory they met Kid Kennedy and some of his friends.

They had been laughing, and their faces were red.

Kid turned to Jack airily, but with the accustomed sneer used in speaking to Jack.

"That was a pretty cute trick, Lightfoot! We've just been talking it over. We didn't suppose you had enough nerve to do a thing like that."

"By granny! we're thinkin' it was yeou done it!" declared Jubal.

"That so? Then take another think!"

He gave Jubal an unpleasant look.

"Why should you jump to the conclusion that I did it?" Jack asked, undismayed.

"Well, that alarm-clock!"

"Alarm-clock?"

"The one that was over by the window—the one that tuned up as second fiddle to the first one. It was your clock."

"My clock?"

Jack felt startled.

"Just so. And that was a fool trick—for you to use your own clock! Why didn't you put some other fellow's there, if you wanted to do a thing of that kind?"

"You seem to know so much that I guess you know all about it!" Jack shot at him. "If that's my clock I wasn't aware of it, and I never placed it there. As you say, I'd have been a fool to do that."

Kid and his crowd laughed in an irritating way.

"Them fellers air meaner than pusley," said Jubal, as he passed with Jack and the others on up-stairs, leaving Kid and his friends laughing on the steps.

"He wants to irritate us and hopes to scare us."

"I ain't scarin' wuth a cent," Jubal boasted. "But if that was your clock?"

It was really Jack's alarm-clock, as they found on entering his room. At least, his alarm-clock was not there, and he had not himself removed it.

"You'd better get that clock, if it's yours," advised Tom. "I'll go with you, and we'll get it now."

When they returned to the lecture-room for the clock they discovered that it had been taken away; and Gregory Smoot had awakened long enough from his condition of chronic sleepiness to stand before them at the command of Professor Chubb and demand their presence in Chubb's office.

On entering Chubb's office, they saw the clock on his desk.

Chubb hooked his big glasses on his nose and looked intently at Jack and Tom as they came into the room.

"I have heard the report of the scandalous proceedings in Professor Conquest's lecture-room this morning," he said, frowning severely. "As you were there I do not need to tell you what occurred. But perhaps you can explain how this clock happened to be there, wound and set ready to go off during the lecture?"

He looked hard at Jack.

"It is your clock, I have been told."

Jack took up the clock.

"Yes, sir," he admitted, "it is my clock."

"You can tell me how it came to be there?"

"No, sir; I haven't the slightest notion."

"We didn't know whose clock it was," said Tom, "until Kid Kennedy told us it was Jack's, just as we were going into the dormitory."

Chubb still bored Jack with the keen eyes that flashed behind the big glasses.

"You do not know when this clock was taken from your room?" he queried.

"No, sir."

"It was in your room this morning?"

"Yes, sir. I had set the alarm, and it went off this morning and awoke me."

"Then it must have been purloined from your room while you were at breakfast?"

"It would seem so, sir," Jack agreed.

"You are sure you did not see some one coming or going from your room, or any one near it?"

"Quite sure," Jack replied.

Chubb took off his glasses and wiped them thoughtfully with his handkerchief.

"When this clock was brought to me with news of the scandalous occurrences in the lecture-room, and it was suggested to me that it was your clock and you had placed it there, I did not believe that you had done so. That belief would have impugned your good sense. And I believe, also, Mr. Lightfoot, that you are altogether too manly to indulge in such child's play, with the idea that it is funny or humorous."

Jack could see that Professor Chubb was putting him on his honor.

"If I had done such a thing, or even thought of it, I shouldn't have been foolish enough to use my own clock," he said, by way of argument.

"Whoever did it," Chubb went on, not committing himself further, "we shall look into the matter."

The interview was at an end, and Jack and Tom went out.

A little later they observed Kid Kennedy walking in the direction of Chubb's office, following the blue-coated Smoot.

"Kid's going to be put under the harrow, too," said Tom. "If he would tell the truth the real culprit could be discovered."

"And it would be himself," added Jack.

"I think so," said Tom; "but he'll never confess it."

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE LABORATORY.

Professor Conquest had reported the "discourtesy" of the morning, as he called it, to Professor Chubb, and then had gone to his laboratory. One of the students had identified the clock as Jack Lightfoot's.

Before leaving the lecture-room Conquest had tried to induct himself into the good graces of the monkey, which still held to the window-ledge above the radiator and refused to come down.

"Stay there, then, you little sinner!" said Conquest. "Your master will certainly come for you by and by."

But when he reached the laboratory he heard a squeak behind him, and discovered that the monkey had followed him there.

Conquest smiled amiably, and again tried to win the good-will of the little creature.

It retreated, hopping to the top of a chair, where it sat as on a limb, while he stirred into life the fire under a crucible. His black cat, frightened by it, scurried out of the room and did not return.

Conquest muttered and talked to himself as he worked, with puckered lips and corrugated brows; and as he thus worked and talked, stirring and blowing the fire, and forgetting the monkey, he heard it squeak again.

The monkey had descended from the chair top and had come up to the fire, apparently for the purpose of getting warm.

He put down a hand to stroke it, when it showed its teeth and retreated.

But when he placed a chair before the fire that began to glow under the melting-pot, it hopped into the chair and sat there in the grateful warmth, holding its little feathered cap in its hand.

It looked at him with alert questioning gaze as he threw into the crucible certain substances, and they began to hiss in the heat.

Recalled again to the monkey by its squeaking chatter, Conquest sat down in another chair and studied it deliberately.

In his moments of repose, and with his wig on, the professor was not a bad-looking man. His face was benign in its expression, and he smiled kindly at the monkey.

"My simian friend," he said, nodding at it, "you wonder what I'm doing. That isn't strange. You know very little. And I—I, a man—know very little more than you do. I can make a fire and can mix chemicals and metals and fuse things; and know something about the earth and the stars; but there is so very much that I don't know that I feel almost as ignorant as you."

The monkey chattered, as if it understood his words, yet a certain showing of its sharp teeth warned him to keep away from it.

After gazing at it in silence for a minute or so, he got up and again began to poke at his fire, for the stuff in the crucible had begun to bubble.

As he worked, the monkey made so sudden and loud a noise that he was forced to look round; and as he did so he saw it jump out of the chair and hop with quick leaps across the floor toward a man who had just entered the room.

Conquest looked at the man questioningly, and saw him catch up the monkey and deposit it on his arm.

The intruder was gentlemanly in appearance, with bushy beard and light-colored hair.

Yet the thing that attracted Professor Conquest was the peculiar gleam of his eyes. It was as if his eyes had caught something of the glint of the fire that glowed and snapped under the crucible. They were dark, but with a fiery shine that made them noticeable.

Conquest bowed to the stranger.

"You surprised me," he said, "but come in! I judge the monkey is yours."

"The little rascal escaped from me," said the man, while the monkey clung to him.

He was not an Italian—that was plain at once. Conquest judged from the yellowish hair that he might be a Swede or Norwegian, or, perhaps, a German; or, perhaps, after all, but a simple American.

He came up to Conquest, bearing the monkey on his arm.

"I was on my way to see you," he said persuasively, "but was kept from coming directly to you by the escape of the monkey. It jumped out of my arms as I came along the campus, and when I ran after it a spirit of mischief seized it and it ran up a tree. It hopped from the tree to one of the wings of the dormitories, and I went up into the dormitories to find it, for I thought it entered one of the windows. Awhile ago, when out on the campus again, one of the students told me he thought it had come in this direction."

He sat down in the chair which the monkey had occupied and looked at the fire and the crucible.

"The reduction of ores?" he asked.

"No, just a chemical experiment. I am making them all the time. It is a most fascinating study."

"There can be nothing more fascinating."

The professor of chemistry and physics beamed on him.

"The search for the unknowable—the search for the unattainable, even—that is life!" said Conquest.

"Very true!"

The stranger smiled.

Conquest had taken a chair. After using the blower on the fire he turned to the stranger.

"As I told you," said the latter, "I was coming to see you."

"Very true; I remember you said that."

"I had heard of you, and I wanted to call on you. I brought my monkey along—a very foolish thing to do. It escaped out of my arms and led me a wild-goose chase, and because of that I failed to find you in the lecture-room."

He fondled the monkey, and it nestled in his arms. Its feathered cap had fallen to the floor and been forgotten by it.

"You had heard of me?" said Conquest.

He was flattered. His face flushed slowly under the thought that his name and reputation had gone out so widely.

"You interest me very much," he added.

"Who has not heard of you?" asked the stranger. "I refer merely to scientific men, you know. Who among scientific men has not heard of the great Professor Columbus Conquest, whose papers on chemical affinities, and on the relation of mind to matter, and kindred subjects, have appeared so often in the leading scientific journals?"

Professor Conquest swelled with innocent pride. Though he had not labored and written for fame, it was pleasant to know that what he had written had attracted the attention of thoughtful men.

"Scientific men are the only ones whose good-will is worth having," said the stranger.

Conquest nodded.

"It has been a very great pleasure to me to know a few scientific men," he confessed. "You are yourself a scientist, I take it—perhaps an investigator, an experimenter?"

The stranger shook his head sadly.

"I wish I were. I am, in comparison with yourself, densely ignorant; I know little more than this monkey resting on my knee. But I am immensely interested in all things scientific and in scientific men. So I came to see you."

The open flattery was not distasteful to the simple-minded professor. There was no guile or hypocrisy in his own heart, and he never looked for these qualities in the hearts of others.

He sat flushing, his pride touched.

"You are very welcome," he said.

"You were beginning an experiment when I entered?" asked the stranger.

"A very simple one—merely something to occupy my mind."

His memory went back to the occurrences in the lecture-room, and his face flushed even a more rosy color as he recalled the striking alarm-clocks, the popping bottles, the loss of his wig, and the consequent exposure of his baldness to the students, whom he pictured as laughing at him even now.

"I was much annoyed in the lecture-room this morning," he explained. "Many things went wrong, and——"

"Those students are an ungrateful lot!"

"Very true," Conquest admitted regretfully. "But I can never hold anything against them; for what they do, you see, they do in ignorance, and in the exuberance of youth. You do not chide your monkey when it frisks and plays."

"I slap it sometimes, when it pulls my hair!"

Conquest flushed again, and put his hand to his head to assure himself that his wig was in place. He ran his fingers through the hair and straightened it up in a tangle, in the old familiar way.

"Boys are but monkeys, in a good many things," he declared; "so I have much sympathy for them; and often bear things, without complaining, that other men would not endure."

"And I'll be bound they return your kindness by being sevenfold more mean to you!"

"Not always—not always, I am sure!" Conquest urged. "They are very kind sometimes. When I can keep them interested, by experiments or otherwise, they are very attentive and kind. I fail often to keep them interested."

"I suppose you made no complaint of what they did this morning during the lecture hour?"

"Yes, I reported it; because I am required to when anything goes very wrong; but I made the complaint as mild as I could. I do not want to get the young gentlemen into trouble."

"They'll not repay you for your consideration," said the fiery-eyed man, with a grim smile. "If you'd knock a few of their heads together it would do more good. I have had a good deal of worldly experience, and that is my advice."

Conquest looked shocked and hurt.

"They are like your monkey," he insisted; "they do not mean it. They are led purely by a spirit of mischief."

The stranger let his eyes wander to the fire and the crucible again, and stroked the head of the monkey, which lay content in his arms.

Conquest noted the direction of his gaze.

"Ah, yes; my experiment?" he remarked.

He used the blower again and made the charcoal under the crucible glow to an angry red. Within the crucible sang a bubbling sound.

Then he began to explain the nature of the simple experiment which he was making.

The stranger rose from the chair and stood beside him, still holding the monkey.

"The old alchemists had strange beliefs," said the stranger.

Conquest looked up with a pleased smile.

"They were not wrong in everything," he declared. "The old alchemy is really the basis of the modern chemistry."

"But their belief that they could change the baser metals—common iron, for instance—into gold! What an absurd notion that was. And that other dream they had, that they could produce perpetual motion."

"They had their dreams," said Conquest, deeply interested; "but their dreams were in some instances prophetic. At least I think so."

He turned to a small table at one side of the room and drew from a drawer a little box of cardboard.

This he opened, and from it took some small black crystals, placing them in the open palm of his hand. At the same time he produced a pocket magnifier.

"This glass is not very strong," he said apologetically, "but if you will examine these crystals——"

He held the magnifier, and the stranger, with the monkey on his arm, peered through the glass.

"They are——"

"Diamonds," said Conquest proudly.

"Diamonds!"

"Even so. Black, to be sure, and worth very little. The interesting thing is that I made them."

The stranger examined them again.

"It required a very great heat—almost greater than I am able to produce in this laboratory. If man could get a heat as great as nature produces in the bowels of the earth he could make diamonds as fine and large as nature does; but he cannot produce the heat. A diamond is simply a bit of carbon which nature has put through her crucible and turned out a diamond. That is why coal is called black diamonds."

The stranger drew a long breath.

"That is almost as good as the old dream of the alchemists, that they could change the baser metals into gold," said Conquest, flushed with triumph and pleasure.

"And will diamonds some day be made by men?"

"They are made by men now—I have made these, as you see."

"But I mean large, bright, commercial diamonds?" said the stranger, to whom the idea of value seemed to appeal strongly.

Conquest smiled and shook his head.

"It is hardly likely. We should have to duplicate the tremendous heat of nature, and her other processes. Our diamonds are but black specks, yet they are diamonds. That is the best we can do now, and I do not think we shall ever be able to make diamonds of the kind that a beautiful woman would want to wear and to pay big sums for."

The stranger sighed as this dream was shattered.

"And, of course, perpetual motion is but a foolish notion," he said.

Conquest laughed.

"Come into my lecture-room any day, and I'll show you perpetual motion. Half the students who attend my lectures are troubled with it. I wonder they don't fall out of the seats with their perpetual squirming and twisting. Let me leave them for a moment to step into another room, and a whirlwind breaks out; and when I hurry back I find the air full of flying paper wads, and, perhaps, a fellow or two scrambling for some object in the middle of the floor. Oh, yes, there's perpetual motion, always has been, and always will be, while the world stands and there are young people in it.

"But, after all," he added, "what would the old world be without the liveliness and spirit of young people? It would be a quiet, dead old world, even for me. They do not annoy me half as much as often they think they do."

The kind-hearted man sat in his chair, smiling at the fire.

"My work in the class and lecture-room is a great delight to me; and I enjoy my experiments here. Shall I show you some of the other things I have done?"

"I don't doubt they are wonderful," said the stranger eagerly.

Conquest noted the red glitter of the eyes, but forgot it immediately in his own interest in the things he now exhibited—strange crystals produced by the crucible heat, queer mixtures in bottles, powders in boxes and papers, together with specimens of rock and quartz that he had picked up in his rambles about Seagirt.

When the stranger departed, carrying the monkey wrapped carefully in a cloak borrowed from Conquest, he had not even told the latter his name, and Conquest had not thought to ask it.

This omission came to the absent-minded professor after the stranger had disappeared.

He stood before his crucible, corrugating his brows in thought, and with his finger on his forehead.

"Singular," he said, speaking to himself, as was his wont often when alone, "but I did not think to ask that gentleman for his name! If I did, I've forgotten it; and if he told me, I've forgotten that. But I don't think he told me. He is a scientist himself, in all except the learning—he has the spirit of the true scientist, inquisitiveness, curiosity, imagination, the desire for research. I would I had asked his name. I will do so when he comes again. He was a most interesting man."

CHAPTER V.

THE STRANGER COMES BACK.

The stranger, however, came back almost immediately, as if he had forgotten something.

"The wind blows sharp from the lake," he said, "and I find that the monkey was very much chilled in its escape from me, and shivers when the wind strikes it; so, if you do not object, I will sit with it a little longer in this warm room before the fire."

Conquest was delighted.

"Certainly," he said; and he drew forth the chair for the stranger.

"Tell me a little more about those recent experiments of yours, when you were working on the explosives; you had discovered some very powerful explosives!"

"And came near wrecking the laboratory with them," said Conquest, forgetting already that he meant to ask this stranger his name.

"Just so—the thing was very interesting."

Conquest again explained the nature of the composition of gunpowder, of nitroglycerin, of dynamite, and something about the new explosive used by the Japanese in their late war with Russia, and which they call Shimose powder, from the name of its inventor. Then he told of his own experiments and of the new explosives he had made, some samples of which he had in the laboratory.

The stranger asked many questions, to the delight of the professor.

"If we can make war so deadly that every one who goes into a battle will be killed, there will be no more battles," said Conquest, with enthusiasm. "I am working in the interests of peace—a Christian peace. When men know that death is the certain result of fighting, they will not fight, but will find some peaceful means to settle their disputes."

Another class had gathered in the lecture-room to hear Professor Conquest, but he had forgotten all about that class, and that the hour of the lecture was at hand; he was enjoying himself rarely with this appreciative stranger.

But suddenly the blue-coated Smoot appeared, with word from Professor Chubb, and an inquiry as to why Professor Conquest was not in the lecture-room.

Conquest flushed guiltily.

"I forgot it," he said; and clapped his hat on his head and went out hurriedly, following Smoot.

Left alone, the inquisitive stranger began to look about the laboratory.

"I thought we should have to go away and come another time," he muttered, speaking to the monkey on his arm; "but when I found there was a class waiting for him in the lecture-room it wasn't hard to find an excuse to get back here. And now we'll look round a bit by ourselves."

In the lecture-room, toward which Professor Conquest was hurrying, the class assembled was cutting up "high jinks."

Why does the absence of a teacher from the class-room call for a thing of this kind? I suppose it is true that no teacher was ever long away from a room filled with waiting pupils who could trust the pupils to conduct themselves in his absence the same as in his presence.

Certainly Conquest's students were not conducting themselves in a manner entirely creditable. Two of them were down on the floor wrestling, with a dozen others grouped round these two; and in the opposite end of the room some unfortunate had been driven into a corner and was being pelted with paper balls.

Such of the students as remained in their seats were thumping and pounding their desks, or shouting calls to each other.

The din stopped when the heavy footsteps of Professor Conquest were heard in the outer hall, and by the time he got into the room everything was quiet; even the two boys who had been rolling on the floor were in their seats, with books before them, behind which they were trying to hide their very red faces.

Conquest affected not to know what had been occurring, and began his lecture on chemical affinities, which he had delivered so many times that he knew it by heart, and forgot the stranger whom he had left in the laboratory.

But the stranger was using the time to his own great satisfaction.

He was burrowing into every corner, inspecting the interiors of desks and drawers, examining the contents of retorts and crucibles, even reading Conquest's notes of his experiments, which he found written in a big, ledger-like book.

He paid particular attention to the electric lighting of the room, discovered where the wires entered, and observed that a drop-light wire might be extended to connect with one of the others.

"Ah, it would be easy to burn up this place by means of those wires!" he said, speaking to himself in a low tone. "It could be made to seem the most natural accident in the world—a mere crossing of the electric wires! Such fires occur every day."

He smiled strangely, and his black eyes held a peculiar glitter.

"And those explosives, and the bottled chemicals! A great explosion could be made to take place here and seem most natural."

Not a thing in the laboratory escaped the attention of those keen eyes.

When Professor Conquest returned, at the end of the lecture hour, he found the man and the monkey gone.

But apparently nothing had been disturbed.

"A wonderful and interesting man," he said. "I wish he had waited for me; I should have shown him some other interesting experiments I have tried recently. I hope I shall get to see him again. And there, I recall now that I did not learn his name. I forgot to question him on that, and he forgot to mention it. My self-absorption, and his warm interest in the things I was telling him, made him forget it. I shall try to remember to ask him for his name, if he calls again."

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE LAKE.

Many skaters were out on the ice of the lake that afternoon when Jack and his friends went down.

It was fun just to watch that crowd.

One end of the lake had been taken possession of by small boys. Yelling, screaming, tumbling, they skated there in such numbers that the older skaters gave the place over to them.

Skating tandem, four or five in a string, they butted everybody they could, and invariably landed, with much bellowing, in a heap.

Thirty or forty of them finally formed into line and began to skate round and round in a circle. They called it the merry-go-round. The idea was to go as fast as possible until fagged out or too dizzy to take another stroke. At every revolution some skater lost his balance and measured his length on the ice.

Over him tripped half-a-dozen others; but the screaming, light-hearted skaters never stopped. They swung inside or outside of the jumbled mass of arms and legs and kept the fun going.

Jack and his friends stood on the shore watching the gay scene.

Nearer at hand some fancy skaters were performing stunts.

But there were as many awkward skaters as graceful ones; and there was many a fall; and, from the yelps that sometimes followed, liniment and arnica would be demanded when the unfortunates reached home.

Kitty Percival skated by with a group of bright-eyed girls, all wearing white sweaters and colored turbans. Roguish eyes were brightened and pink cheeks reddened by the vigorous exercise and the nipping air.

Everywhere sounded the joyous shouts of the free-from-care youths and maids; everywhere clicked the sharp blades of the skates. It was a sight to please a lover of the ice and of youth.

Putting on their skates, Jack and his friends skated through the groups near the shore, and then swung with swift, gliding strokes, down toward the farther end of the lake.

Some ice-yachts seemed to be doing business there.

"You ought to have your flier out," said Tom, speaking to Jack.

"That's so, too," Jack assented. "We'll bring it down in the morning."

Jack had shipped his ice-boat from home, where he had made it the previous winter and used it on Cranford Lake.

He believed it was the swiftest craft of its kind in Seagirt, though he had never raced it yet against anything there.

He had sent for this ice-boat after discovering that Kid Kennedy had one, and it had been his intention to challenge Kennedy for a race; and this he might do yet, if the thing came round favorably.

"That's Kennedy," said Tom, nodding toward an ice-boat that came now swiftly toward them as they drove down in its direction.

"It's his ice-boat," Jack agreed.

"But, by granny, 'tain't him in the boat!" said Jubal.

The ice-boat flashed toward them like a bird on the wing, and passed them.

But the one who guided it was not Kennedy.

A man with bushy beard and yellowish hair, and strange bright eyes that peered at them as the boat shot by, had crouched in the cockpit, guiding the boat.

Jack stopped, wheeled about, and looked at the man in the ice-yacht.

"That's Kid's boat, I think," said Tom.

"I guess you're right," Lafe admitted, fishing a peanut out of his pocket and beginning to eat it, as if that would aid his memory. "I guess you're right."

"But the man?" cried Jack.

"A relertive of Kid's, mebbe," said Jubal. "Er Kid may have hired it to some one, ye know."

"But the eyes!" said Jack.

"What about the eyes?" Lafe queried. "I didn't notice anything."

"He stared purty hard!" suggested Jubal.

"His eyes looked bright and red from the cold," added Tom.

"I've seen some one who had eyes like that," said Jack.

"Who?" asked Lafe. "I've seen lots of fellows with red eyes, if that's what you mean."

"I'm wrong, of course," said Jack. "I'll tell you later. He's turning back, and we'll get another good look at him."

The ice-yacht came flying back, but it swung over toward the other side of the lake, and they did not really get as close a view of the man as before.

When Jack and his friends skated back to the lower end where the crowd was thickest, they encountered Kid Kennedy, Jack's bitter enemy at the present time.

Jack ventured to speak to him.

"Is that your ice-yacht out at the other end of the lake?" he asked.

Kid's face flushed.

He didn't expect to be spoken to by Jack Lightfoot, and he hardly knew whether to be angry or pleased.

"Cert!" he growled, as a compromise.

"I thought it was."

"Yes, it's mine; and I reckon you think your boat, that you've been bragging on, can beat it?"

"I think so, yes; but that's not why I asked about it. I wanted to know who the man is."

Kid shot him a suspicious glance, and wondered whether it would not be well to refuse to answer this. Anything to annoy Lightfoot had come to be his motto.

But after an instant of hesitation he answered:

"I don't know who the mut is, but he's the owner of that monkey that hopped into the lecture-room this morning. Some of the fellers saw him with the monkey, and saw him come from Conquest's laboratory. Does that satisfy you?"

"It does," said Jack. "Thank you."

He was turning away when Kid stopped him.

"Say," Kid called, "now that I've answered that, perhaps you'll be willing to tell the names of the guys that kicked up the row in the lecture-room with them alarm-clocks and bottles?"

He grinned wickedly.

"I think I know who could tell the names."

"Who?"

"Kid Kennedy."

"Be a good boy, then, and don't let anybody know you're such a guesser," said Kid, with a harsh laugh.

He turned away.

"Another thing, Kid!" Jack called after him.

Kid stopped, his skates grinding.

"Yes?" he snarled.

"If you don't know who the man is who has your ice-boat, maybe you won't mind telling me how he happened to get hold of it?"

"He hired it."

"Thank you. That's all."

"When are you going to race that boat against mine?" Kid asked now. "You've been bragging a good deal ever since yours came."

"Oh, any time," Jack answered; "I'll race you any time."

Again he skated on, and rejoined his friends.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MAN WITH THE HAUNTING EYES.

Jack Lightfoot's ice-boat was put on the lake the next morning,

It was not a large ice-yacht, but it was as trim as a racer and strongly built.

Jack called it the *Daisy*, in honor of his sister.

Lafe Lampton, Tom Lightfoot, and Jubal Marlin were with him when the boat was slipped from the cart to the ground, and then shoved out on the ice, where the mast was stepped and the sail put in order.

When this work had been done, Lafe Lampton walked slowly round the boat, eying it critically, while he munched an apple.

"I don't see but she's all right," he said. "Going to race Kennedy's, if he hands you any of his cheek?"

"I am."

"That's right. That fellow gives me a headache."

"Hello!" said Jubal suddenly. "His boat's aout on the ice again."

"And that man who ran her yesterday is sailing her," said Tom.

"I want to get another look at that fellow," said Jack, with sudden interest. "Pile in, Lafe, and we'll run down along the edge of the lake and try to get a close look at him."

Lafe "piled in," and a moment later the *Daisy* was skimming over the ice, running diagonally across the lake, to cut into the course taken by the other boat.

The latter boat was flying, with the wind on the quarter and the sail well spread. The man apparently knew how to handle a boat of that kind.

But that was a thing Jack Lightfoot also knew as well as the next one. He had sailed the *Daisy* over the ice of Cranford Lake many times, and had even won with her some hotly contested races.

Now, when Jack let the *Daisy* out, with Lafe hanging

on by his "eyebrows," the manner in which it lifted and flew over the ice was enough to take the breath of those aboard it.

Ice yachting, with the wind and the ice right and the sails and tiller managed by clever hands, comes about as near to flying as any sport which can be imagined.

Fast as the *Daisy* went toward the upper end of the lake the boat of Kennedy went as fast; and, having the shortest leg of the angle, it passed the *Daisy*.

Jack shifted the tiller and drew the *Daisy* over toward the middle of the lake, instead of continuing on toward the far end; in so doing again putting himself in position where he might intercept the other boat.

"Get a good look at his face, and particularly his eyes, when he goes by," said Jack to Lafe.

"All right; let 'er go!" Lafe answered.

He was crouching low in the standing-room, and his great weight helped to keep the *Daisy* down on the ice.

"You're mighty good ballast, Lafe!" Jack laughed. "With this wind the *Daisy* would simply jump off the ice if it wasn't for you. She can't quite lift you."

"Let 'er go," said Lafe, with a grin.

A moment later he shouted in excitement:

"He's shifting his course. Jiminy crickets, that looks like he don't want you to get close to him!"

"I'll get close to him now, if I have to run the risk of fouling his boat," said Jack, a tremor in his tones.

"All right—lay alongside of the pirate! He looks like a pirate."

"He would look more like one if he had different beard and hair and clothing. But it's his eyes—get a good look at them! Now, here we go!"

The *Daisy* fell off a point and shot over in the direction necessary to intercept Kennedy's boat.

For a little while the stranger held on his way.

Then the unexpected happened.

As Jack's *Daisy* drew near, the stranger shifted the course of his boat, throwing the tiller round and hauling sharply and quickly on the sheet of the sail.

When he did that, the boat, which was much larger and heavier than Jack's, made a jump like a hound straight toward it.

Jack tried to avoid the inevitable collision, but the thing had been done too quickly.

Lafe forgot to look at the eyes which had so haunted and tormented Jack's fancy. He crouched low, as the stabbing bowsprit of Kennedy's boat was shot toward him with almost the speed of a hurled spear.

Then the heavier boat, guided by the man with the haunting eyes, crashed into Jack's, and Jack escaped death by a wild leap into the air—that leap alone saving him from being struck down or torn from his place by the spearlike bowsprit.

The two yachts came together with a crash, followed by a loud cracking and snapping of timber and a tearing of sails, the smaller yacht being almost crushed.

Lafe clung with all his might, and Jack dropped to the ice out beyond the point of immediate danger.

The man with the haunting eyes made a quick motion with his right hand to his hip pocket, and for an instant there was the bright gleam of a revolver butt; his face and gleaming eyes were fixed on Jack Lightfoot with the most intense hate and malignity.

But the thought, or the anger, appeared to pass away at once, and neither Jack nor Lafe saw the weapon. The pistol fell back into his pocket; and then, with a scraping sound, and more ripping and tearing, the boats pulled themselves apart.

With a wild leap, like a freed race-horse, the heavier boat of Kid Kennedy now raced on, leaving the *Daisy* in its half-wrecked condition, and Jack lying on the ice.

Before the motion of the *Daisy* had stopped, Lafe Lampton was out of the wrecked cockpit and running heavily over the ice.

But before he reached him Jack sat up.

"Jiminy crickets, I thought you was a goner!" Lafe panted, his face white with excitement and the sudden fear for Jack's safety.

Jack seemed dazed and stared about.

Lafe clutched him by the shoulder and arm, and lifted him.

Then Jack dashed a hand across his eyes, drew a deep breath, and knew just where he was and what had happened to him.

He saw Kid Kennedy's boat flying over the ice. Its sail was torn and hung like a ragged wreck, but it could still go, while Jack's trimmer and lighter boat was knocked out.

Jack lifted himself, seizing Lafe's arm.

"Did you see his eyes?" he panted.

Lafe laughed, and had a great sense of relief.

"Oh, you're all right, I guess!" he cried. "Jiminy crickets, but I was scared a minute!"

"You thought that bowsprit was going to hit me?"

"I thought it was going through you like a spear. And then I was afraid you'd had your neck cracked, mebbe, when you fell here on the ice. Good thing this last freeze was a hard one! Otherwise, you'd have broken a hole through and gone to the bottom; and you know I'd hate to have to dive for you in water as cold as this."

Lafe was laughing again, he felt so good over Jack's escape.

"That's all right," said Jack; "but I want to know if you saw his eyes?"

"Did you?"

"No."

"Well, I didn't, either. You're sure you're all right? If it will make you feel good I'll say that I saw his eyes—I'll even say that I examined them both with a magnifying-glass, and that one is green with little blue dots in it, like a negligee shirt, and that the other is red, white, and blue, like the American flag. I think you're nutty! That fellow just simply can't be the fellow you think he is."

"Perhaps not," said Jack; "yet I'd be willing to swear to the truth of it."

"He's wrecked the *Daisy*," said Lafe regretfully.

"He has, Lafe. But that can be fixed."

"Going to have her taken to a boat-builder's?"

"I think I'll have her taken up to the academy. There is a shed out back there which isn't used for much of anything, and maybe I can get permission to put the *Daisy* in there and repair her. It won't take long. Now, we'll see if we can tack her together enough to get her down to the other end of the lake."

"Oh, we can do that all right!" said Lafe optimistically.

He glanced down the lake.

"Jiminy Christmas!" he cried, in sudden excitement, "that fellow's coming back again!"

The ice-yacht mentioned by Lafe, and at which both

Lafe and Jack were now staring, came sharply down the wind; and then tacking, shot so straight toward our friends on the ice that it seemed another collision was intended.

But before it reached the point where the *Daisy* lay Jack and Lafe saw that Kid Kennedy was in the boat now, instead of the stranger.

Kennedy threw the ice-yacht round with a scrape of flying runners, and brought it to on the ice not far away.

His face was red and angry.

"What do you mean by ramming my boat?" he shouted.

"Take a look at our boat," Jack answered, "and see if you think we did the ramming!"

"Wow! rammed that big boat with the *Daisy!*" said Lafe. "Come off!"

"The fellow said so."

"He's got a gifted imagination, Kennedy," Jack answered.

"You mean that he lies?"

"I mean that he lied if he said we rammed his boat."

"Well, I saw you put your boat in his way; I saw that myself! Why did you shoot your boat across from that point clear over to this side, and so get in his way as he came flying from the other end?"

"That wasn't ramming his boat."

"But it was getting in his way!" said Kennedy, who seemed resolved to provoke a row.

Lafe laughed humorously.

"Just jump down here and see how we've been punished for ramming your little boat," he said to Kennedy. "The *Daisy* is a wreck—she's got ribs broken, three or four ankles twisted, her skull is cracked, and her top-gear is torn into ribbons."

"Aw, don't try to be funny!" growled Kennedy, not pleased with Lafe's attempted pleasantry.

"You never was funny in your life, Kennedy, was you?" Lafe asked, with apparent innocence.

"I've come down to see about the wreck of my boat—she's smashed a good deal, and that fellow said you did it."

His tone was insulting, but Jack tried to keep his temper.

"I'll tell you what we'll do, Kennedy; we'll pay for repairing your boat if you'll pay for repairing ours. How'll that hit you?"

"Aw, rodents!"

"I just wanted to impress on you that our boat is damaged much worse than yours is."

"And we didn't try to ram your boat or get in the way of it, or anything of the kind," said Lafe firmly.

"What did you mean, then, by swinging across to this side of the lake? That put you right in his way, didn't it, when you saw that his boat was coming along here?"

Jack looked earnestly at Kid.

"I'll make a confession," he said; "we did that because we wanted to get a good look at his eyes. They're very queer eyes, and they seem to shine now and then like fire—or just as if you'd lighted a red lantern behind them. Kennedy, I'd like to have you ask him, for me, what is the matter with his eyes."

"Ah, gwan! I'll let you do that, I guess. You want to be funny. He'd want to put out my lamps, I reckon, if I went to asking him questions about his. That isn't why you sailed across here—just to get a look at his eyes."

"Isn't it?" said Jack shortly. "Then you find out the real reason."

"I suppose you wouldn't want to tow the wreck of the *Daisy* down to the end of the lake?" Lafe asked, with apparent innocence.

"Nit! Go fall on yourself! I didn't wreck your yacht. It was no good, in the first place, except to give Lightfoot a subject to brag about."

Then Kid Kennedy sailed on.

CHAPTER VIII.

MACK REMINGTON'S WARNING.

When Jack Lightfoot went up to his room in the dormitory, immediately after the foregoing events, he found some mail awaiting him, and in it two or three letters from Cranford.

The one he picked up first had been written and mailed last, and it was from Mack Remington, the newspaper correspondent.

"Dear Jack," it ran, "I've got big news for you. Boralmo has escaped from prison and is at liberty. The escape occurred more than a week ago, but news of it has just reached Cranford. If it was mentioned in the newspapers I overlooked it. I've written a 'story' about it for the Cardiff *Guardian,* and send you a copy in this mail. Hope he won't turn up in Seagirt. If I'd thought there was any danger from that source I'd have wired you. Give my love to all the fellows, and tell them they're lucky dogs, and that I wish I was another and could be with them. The old place is lonesome without you. I saw Kate Strawn and Nellie Conner this morning, and they asked if I had any news from Seagirt lately. Well, I've got some stuff to write up for the *Guardian,* and must saw this off. Write when you find time.

Your friend,

"MACKLIN REMINGTON."

Lafe came into the room just as Jack finished reading this. Jack threw the letter toward him.

"Just as I thought, Lafe!" he exclaimed. "I knew I was right."

"What?" said Lafe, catching the letter.

"Boralmo!"

Lafe stared at him.

"Sure thing?" he asked.

"Sure thing, Lafe. I felt from the first that the fellow was Boralmo. Now I know it. Mack says he's out of prison."

Lafe looked troubled as he opened and began to read the letter.

"But that don't prove that he's here!" he insisted.

"Reel Snodgrass is here, and has been here for a number of days."

"Yes, I know that, but——"

"Boralmo would go where Reel is; and so he has come here. Of course, as an escaped prisoner he would have to disguise himself to secure safety against re-arrest."

"He'd have to do that, all right."

"Well, I feel sure," said Jack, "that the fellow who rammed our boat was Boralmo; and as Kid says he's

the same chap who came here with the monkey we've got a line on him, and will know who to watch."

Lafe dropped to the cot as he read the letter through.

Before he glanced at the other letters from Cranford, Jack read the newspaper clipping sent by Mack Remington.

There the daring escape of Boralmo from prison was set forth, so far as the details were known. His flight had apparently been almost miraculous. He had cut an iron bar, and then had crawled through an opening that apparently a man of his size could not get past. How he had cut through the bar was a puzzle, as everything in the way of knives or cutting tools had been taken from him when he came to the prison, and no one had been given an opportunity to get saws to him since.

"Which merely shows that those prison officials don't understand what a clever rascal Boralmo is," was Jack's thought as he finished reading the clipping. "He could have a whole machine-shop hid about him and no one would know it."

Jack had spoken that last aloud.

"Yes, that's so," Lafe admitted, remembering some of Boralmo's sleight-of-hand performances he had witnessed.

Lafe now looked over the newspaper clipping.

"Of course we can't be sure this fellow here in Seagirt is Boralmo," he insisted. "You think you're certain, but you can't be. The question is, What are we going to do? Notify the police?"

"Not yet."

"Better go slow until we're dead sure. That's right, I guess. The question in my mind is, If that was Boralmo, how did he know Reel was in this town?"

"Reel might have written to him."

"Of course! What a fool I am. The prison rules permit convicts to receive letters, I believe."

"Yes, after the letters have been read by some one in the prison."

"If Reel wrote to him he could send saws to him with which he cut his way out. Reel is about as clever as his old dad in some things."

"That's right, too," Jack admitted.

He picked up the other letters and read them, but none of them mentioned Boralmo.

"If I'm right in thinking this fellow is Boralmo, then there's a hint that soon there will be something doing, when he comes poking round the academy. He has already made the acquaintance of Professor Conquest, and I think he has met Professor Chubb. What does it mean?"

Lafe's face grew serious.

"It can mean but one thing," he confessed reluctantly, "and that is that he's preparing in some way to strike at you."

"It was bad enough to have Reel here."

"Reel came here to annoy you and make trouble for you," said Lafe. "He's shown himself a dirty puppy. But this means more. Boralmo wouldn't trouble to come here just to annoy you. I don't like to say it, Jack," he added, "but I think there's danger here for you."

"I imagine so, too."

"Then hadn't you better go away for awhile—take a little trip? If this man is Boralmo, the police officers can have him corralled by the time you'll want to come back, and the danger will be over."

"Run away?" Jack laughed. "I think you're more frightened, Lafe, than I am."

"Yes, I am, for you," Lafe admitted.

He turned and looked from the window.

"We've got to tell Tom about this right away, and Jubal; and we'll all have to watch out. I don't know but it would be better to send Mack's letter to the Seagirt police, and tell them you think Boralmo, the escaped prisoner, is here. It would relieve my mind a bit, anyway."

CHAPTER IX.

BORALMO.

Reel Snodgrass had kept well away from the ice since the failure of his murderous plans of a short time before, when he had tried to bring about Jack's death.

Kid Kennedy had done the work for him, and had dragged himself and Jack into the ice hole near the hockey-field; but he had afterward explained, and claimed, that the feverish condition of his head had made him do it, and that at the moment he was temporarily insane. Ben Birkett some days before had struck Kid with a club, and Kid had been troubled with his head, and that offered a ready apology.

It was the excuse Kid believed himself and which he made his friends accept.

Kid's attitude toward Reel had not been the same, however, since that time; and as there was nothing at present to be gained by haunting the lake and the campus, Reel remained in town and a part of the time in his room.

Every night he went to a certain gambling resort not far off, and there played cards and other games for money, with such success usually that he was ahead of the games and had money in his purse.

But Reel's habits had become extravagant. No matter how much money he had he seemed always to need a great deal more.

This gambling resort had been raided by the police a short time before; but as lightning is said not to strike twice in the same place, the gaming went on there after the raid, apparently without fear of the law.

Going up to this resort one night, Reel's attention was attracted to a man whose lucky playing had drawn almost every one round the table where he sat.

Chips and money were piled high on the table, and his winnings had been large.

He sat with his back to the wall, so that his cards could not be seen by any one.

Apparently he held a great hand. For now he went down into the bottom of his purse and drew out the last he had there; and then rising and unlooping a belt from his waist he threw it on the table, asking that its contents be counted, and claiming that it held more than a thousand dollars.

He staked everything he had.

Then he showed his hand—a royal flush—and raked in his winnings.

The man was Boralmo.

Reel Snodgrass did not know this, even though the man was his own father, so clever was Boralmo's disguise.

Reel was a "plunger" at cards. Moreover, he had been taught by Boralmo how to deal to an opponent any hand he chose, and to himself the cards he wished.

He believed that the strange gambler had used marked cards; so he called for a fresh pack, and declared his willingness to try a game or two with the winner.

The man veiled the red in his eyes by looking down at the table.

"I warn the young gentleman that I shall beat him, and therefore advise him to keep out of the game."

"Bah!" sneered Reel recklessly. "If you get my money you're welcome to it."

A new deck of cards was brought, and Reel broke it open.

When it came Reel's turn to deal he passed to Boralmo the cards he wished the latter to have, doing it, as he believed, so cleverly that his opponent would think the deal was fair; and he gave to himself the cards he wished.

He won, as he had expected; and as the play went on he marked the cards, so that he would have no trouble in identifying them from the backs, doing this with little pinches of his thumb-nail on the corners as they passed through his hands.

Again when it came his turn to deal Reel gave to Boralmo, as he thought, the cards he wished him to have, and took a better hand himself.

The playing had drawn every one in the room round the table.

Boralmo kept his eyes on the table and on the cards, and smoked quietly, saying very little, and that in a voice Reel did not recognize.

Sure now that he had a hand on which he could risk everything, Reel staked every cent he possessed, putting it all up recklessly.

The strange gambler met his bet quietly, seeming to have an unlimited supply of money.

Reel was about to rake the stakes to his side of the table, when Boralmo showed his hand.

It held none of the cards Reed had dealt, but was a hand higher than Reel's and took the winnings.

Reel gasped and flushed.

"That's a cheat!" he shouted angrily.

Boralmo even then did not look him full in the eye.

"The young gentleman uses harsh words," he said. "Can he back them up—can he prove them? Why does he claim that I have cheated? He stated openly that if I beat him I was welcome to his money."

Reel gasped.

He could not confess his belief that he had handed to Boralmo certain cards, for that would have been to declare that he had himself been guilty of cheating.

Some of the spectators laughed unfeelingly at Reel's furious manner and red face.

"I ask that this man be searched," said Reel angrily. "I say that he has cheated. He has cards up his sleeve, or somewhere about him, and I know it. I demand that he be searched and his villainy exposed."

Boralmo smiled now.

"Very well," he said, to the surprise of the spectators. "If the young gentleman demands it it shall be done. Will some of you gentlemen make sure that I have no cards concealed about me? I do this merely to please the young gentleman, and prove to him that I am not the swindler he thinks me."

There was a moment of hesitation—even Reel stared—but when the stranger insisted again that a search should be made of his person for hidden cards, the search was made.

The result was what he expected.

No hidden cards were found.

He raked the money from the table now and dropped it loosely into his pockets.

"Before the young gentleman accuses another of cheating at cards he should know what he is doing. In this case he was very fresh. But as he is young and excited, and his losses are large, I shall not hold him accountable."

He rose leisurely and quietly and made his way toward the door.

He had cleaned out the most expert gamblers there.

For a moment or two some of them whose losses had been heavy looked as if they meant to rush on him and compel him to disgorge; but he went from the house undisturbed with his winnings.

Reel sank into a chair, pale and trembling.

His last dollar was gone.

What that meant he dared not at the moment think. For one thing, it meant that he should have to leave the hotel and his comfortable room there in the morning. A week's board would be due then, and he had no money wherewith to pay; and that meant, also, that his trunk would be held.

He took out a cigarette, lighted it, and began to smoke nervously.

"If some one will lend me something, I will try my luck again," he said, rising at last and walking over to where the gamblers had again grouped round a table.

A young fellow who had become acquainted with Reel there and had lost money to him, but was that night in a winning streak, gaily tossed Reel a five-dollar bill.

"Try your luck again!" he cried.

Reel tried his luck again.

But again he lost, and rose with a frown and a muttered oath.

He pulled his hat over his eyes, lighted another cigarette, and stumbled toward the door.

Some of the reckless gamblers looked at him as he went.

"I hope he doesn't intend to do anything hasty," remarked one.

He had known two or three instances where young men, after heavy losses, had stumbled from the tables and the room in that way, and the papers had reported their suicide the next morning.

The curse of gambling brings about more suicides, more blasted lives, more unhappiness, and more wrecked hopes, than almost anything else. These men knew it, even while they were slaves to it.

"Oh, he'll be all right in the morning!" said another, with a light laugh.

Reel felt wretched as he plunged down the dark stairway and found himself in the poorly lighted street.

"A curse on that swindler!" was his thought. "I know he swindled me, even if they couldn't find the cards on him."

He overlooked the fact that he had tried to swindle the man he was so severely condemning.

It was a case of the biter getting bit; yet he did not choose to look at it in that way.

Reel was desperate and unhappy as he reached his hotel and took his way up to his room, feeling that he should have to leave the place in the morning, and wondering what he should do, now that he had not a dollar.

Work was a thing distasteful to him; yet, even if he had wanted to work, there was no likelihood that he could get a job or a position, for he was practically a stranger in the town, and good positions are sometimes hard to get, if one does not have influential backing.

He was in a highly nervous mood as he unlocked the door of his room and let himself in.

He scratched a match and walked over to the gas-jet. When he had turned it on and lighted it, he glanced about.

He started with surprise.

The gambler who had fleeced him was in the room, sitting in a chair by the window, and was regarding him with a look of amusement.

CHAPTER X.

FATHER AND SON.

"In the name of all the fiends, what are you doing here?" Reel gasped.

The man by the window laughed softly.

"How did you get into my room, and why did you come?" Reel demanded.

The stranger produced a box of cigarettes and coolly selected one, closing the box and slipping it back into his pocket.

Reel dropped nervelessly into a chair.

"I'd like to have you explain this—this visit!" he said.

Then a hopeful thought came to him.

"Perhaps you've come to restore some of the money you swindled me out of?"

The man laughed silently. No sound came from his lips, but his shoulders shook, as he bent forward and scratched a match on the sole of his shoe and then lifted it to light his cigarette.

"I think I heard you say that if I got anything out of you I was welcome to it!" he answered.

Reel's stare of surprise became more pronounced. Something familiar in this man had struck him.

"Good God!" he cried suddenly.

The man lifted his head as he applied the match. A wonderful change had come in his features. The match revealed a familiar smile and a familiar red glint of the eyes.

"You?" cried Reel, his tongue becoming stiff and unwieldy.

"Very true," said the man, throwing down the match. "Does it surprise you?"

"It—it bewilders me—astonishes me! Why you——"

"I was in prison, yes! I suppose you thought I would stay there. You should have known me better."

"But——"

"I have been here already two days, and you did not know it. I have been in the hotel here, and you did not recognize me."

Reel rose in his excitement. His face had been white because he had lost that money. It was whiter now.

"You are not glad to see me?" said Boralmo.

Reel dropped heavily back into his chair.

"Yes, of course, but——"

Boralmo laughed cynically.

"I doubt it. But let it go. I am glad to see you, which is almost as good. I came here because you are here, and because——"

"What?"

"Because Jack Lightfoot is here?"

"You have seen him?"

"This very day, my boy; and also yesterday. I have seen him; and I have seen his friends, and his enemies."

"You are a—devil!"

"Very true; I am your father!"

He felt in a pocket; and then taking out a roll of money in bills, and also some coins, he threw them on the table.

"Your money," he said; "help yourself."

Reel stared in amazement.

"I return to you the money you accused me of swindling you of."

He laughed silently.

"And here"—he reached up and made a swift motion, as if scratching the back of his neck—"are the cards you dealt me, and which you were sure I had."

He laughed again, while Reel continued to stare, but with a growing admiration coming to him.

"Let me tell you once for all, Reel, that it is impossible to beat a gambler at his own game. I have said it before, and I want to impress it on you. If you play with a gambler he will beat you—he will get your money. That is what he plays for. You may play for sport, but he always plays to get your money; and if he cannot get it by fair play he will use unfair play. Here is the proof. I cheated you."

He shook his sleeves, and some cards fell out.

He put his hand down to his shoe, and seemed to comb cards out of its top.

"But they searched you!" said Reel, in amazement.

"Every professional card sharp is of necessity a good deal of a magician. He can deal cards according to his fancy, even while you would think it impossible; and he can conceal cards on his person so cleverly that they cannot be found even though hunted for. I have told you that before."

"And taught me how to do those things myself."

"Just so. I did that to keep you from falling into the nets of these men. To-night I saw a chance to teach you a severe lesson, and I did it."

Reel settled back in his chair. He admired this man, his father, and he also feared him—feared his wonderful ability as a magician and necromancer.

"How did you escape?" he asked breathlessly.

Boralmo took from his pocket a slip of paper—it was a cutting like that sent by Mack Remington to Jack Lightfoot.

"That will tell you. It is not all there. I sawed my way out."

"How? How did you get saws?"

"They searched me, of course, when they put me in prison, but I had the saws on me even then, just as I had the cards on me when your committee up in that room searched me to-night without finding anything."

He smiled.

Reel read the clipping, and looked with growing admiration at his father.

"So I am here," said Boralmo, breathing out a cloud of cigarette smoke. "I hope you are glad to see me."

He settled back comfortably in his chair.

"Tell me all you have been doing," he urged; and pushed the money toward Reel. "Here is your money. I don't want it. I merely wanted to show you that you

are a fool to gamble with professionals. They'll always cheat you."

"Unless I become a professional myself," said Reel, as he clutched the money with trembling eagerness.

"I should not advise you to try that. I'm speaking for your good. It is the sure road to ruin and misery."

"Yet that's what you are!"

"Very true; and I am a wreck, without home or friends—and just now an escaped prison bird and a fugitive from justice. Let the thing alone, Reel. I was sorry to see you up there."

Reel thrust the money down into his pockets, reflecting that now, at least, he would not have to leave the hotel in the morning.

The knowledge, recently gained, that this man was his father, did not thrill him. He did not love Boralmo, but feared him.

Yet in a strange, unfatherly way this man loved Reel. It seemed almost a weakness to him to confess it to himself. He was at war with the world, and even Reel ought to be his enemy, when he had long considered every one as such.

"Tell me all about yourself," he commanded. "How you chance to be here, what you are doing, and what you plan to do."

He sat patiently smoking his cigarette, while Reel began to answer his questions.

"I had no place to go," said Reel, "and very little money. I drifted to Seagirt; but I might not have come if I hadn't learned that Jack Lightfoot was here attending the Seagirt academy."

The red fire in Boralmo's eyes seemed to flame up and snap ominously at mention of the name of Jack Lightfoot.

"So I came here—drifted here; and I contrived to get money enough to live on by gambling, after the little you gave me was spent."

"The little I gave you! It was five hundred dollars!"

"What is that?" said Reel, pettishly and contemptuously. "I have won more than that with cards."

"And lost it all to-night with cards. I've given it back to you; otherwise you'd have been a beggar on the streets in the morning."

Reel's face flushed angrily under the reproof.

"You came here because young Lightfoot was here?" Boralmo questioned; and that ominous red, which Jack had said shone like a red lantern behind the pupils of his eyes, grew more fiery.

"I did," said Reel, quite frankly. "I came here to do him up. He ruined me!" he went on bitterly. "So why should I spare him?"

"Why, indeed?"

Boralmo breathed the question softly, leaning forward as if he found this mood of Reel's interesting.

"Why, indeed?" he repeated.

"I didn't intend to; nor do I intend to now!" Reel smote his hand against his knee in angry emphasis. "I'll do him up yet! But that scheme went against me. I planned to have him drowned under the ice in a hockey game; but the thing failed, because, after all, the fellow I worked to carry it out was a fool."

"Tell me about it," said Boralmo, leaning still farther forward, his eyes now fairly devouring Reel.

Reel told him the whole story.*

"It was a good attempt," said Boralmo approvingly. "I fear I shall become proud of you by and by. Ha, ha! A worthy son of a worthy father!"

The sneer on his face disfigured it more than did the disguise he had affected.

The eyes burned now like coals of fire. Once seen, those eyes could never be forgotten. They were the one feature which Boralmo had often tried to disguise, but could not. Only by keeping his temper well in hand could he subdue that strange fire. For when his temper burned hottest, that red, murderous glow of his eyes became most pronounced. Then they seemed the eyes of a madman, or the fiery, glowing orbs of some animal at bay.

They were devouring now the face of his son, as he bent forward in his chair, his hands on his knees and the cigarette fastened on his lower lip.

"Reel," he said—and Reel started, so strange and terrible was the emphasis—"I, too, came here chiefly because Jack Lightfoot is here. You say he ruined you. True, he did. He did more to me. He put me in that prison."

His voice was low and almost tremulous.

"Yes," said Reel, shifting uneasily under that burning gaze.

"I have already made myself familiar with the place where he lives—with the academy and its grounds, and even with its rooms and dormitories; and have made the acquaintance of the professors—some of them."

Reel gasped with surprise.

"That astonishes you?"

"It oughtn't to," said Reel. "I know how clever you are at such things, and to-night your disguise fooled me completely."

Boralmo laughed as a wolf might laugh had it the gift of laughter.

He rocked back in his chair and covered his glowing eyes with his slender fingers.

The man was by nature an actor. To assume a part and play it to perfection, not on the stage of a theater, but in the world, pleased him more than anything else. He enjoyed the wild surprise which always came when, by and by, he chose to reveal his identity.

He was a strange composite—a mixture of genius and madman. Not even yet had Reel been able to understand him; the best he could do was to admire, and to fear.

"I have planned a thing more dramatic than anything I ever before attempted," said Boralmo, rocking forward and again boring Reel with those gleaming eyes. "I'll warrant that in no melodrama of the stage will you find a thing to equal it."

No comment seemed called for, and Reel did not speak.

*See last week's issue, No. 55, "Jack Lightfoot's Peril; or, Treachery on the Ice," for the complete story of Reel's attempt against the life of Jack Lightfoot.

The fire of those eyes riveted his own, and he could hardly turn his gaze away.

"Perhaps you are acquainted with that academy where our good young friend Jack Lightfoot is trying to fit himself for college?"

"I've been up there."

"You are not very familiar with it?"

"No."

"I knew a good deal about the place even before I came here," said Boralmo, admiring his own cleverness and cunning. "Discovering that you were here and that he was here, I made myself master of all the knowledge possible about it.

"Hence, before I came I was able to prepare myself, and came ready to play my little part in a manner that pleases me. Of course, if I should go about the country in my own proper self, I should be nabbed at once by some officer wanting the reward offered for me. So I had to come here in disguise."

"And you'll get me into trouble by it, too," said Reel nervously.

"If you—my own son," he sneered, "could not recognize me to-night, there is scant chance that any one else can, and particularly a stranger. I am safe enough for the present, and so are you. I have no desire to get you into trouble."

"But you have got me into trouble in the past," Reel objected, still with nervous emphasis.

"Only when trying to help you!" Boralmo purred, his voice making Reel think now of some sleek cat.

"Go on," said Reel. "What is it you propose to do?"

"What I purpose doing is something which you will say yourself is original and dramatic. The end of it will be the death of Jack Lightfoot, and the satisfaction of my revenge and yours."

Reel moved nervously.

"Don't speak so loud; some one might hear you!"

"My voice is as low as the summer breeze," said Boralmo; and he laughed one of his silent, horrible laughs, grimacing as he crouched in his chair. "Listen to my plan."

He bent forward again, holding his smoking cigarette between the fingers of his gesticulating hand.

"There is a professor up there who is half genius and half fool. His name is Conquest, and you may have heard of him. He is professor of chemistry and physics, but he is besides a mineralogist and metallurgist and a scientist of many parts, as well as a clever inventor. To work my plans it was needful that I should gain his acquaintance and his good-will.

"I have done both. See how easily it was done! I went there carrying a monkey, which I hope to use in my plan, and I let it escape and run into his lecture-room. I fancy it created a whirlwind of excitement when it invaded that classic spot.

"It followed him to his laboratory, just when I was ready to follow it in and make apologies for its intrusion, and so gain this professor's acquaintance. That was better—when it led me into the laboratory. There I saw him with his retorts and crucibles, with his inventions and his chemicals; saw the tiny diamonds he has been able to make, that are worthless for practical purposes; and the explosives he is trying to invent, in the interests of peace, he says. But better for me were the many bottles filled with chemicals. Bottles of chemicals explode and they set fire, and they may do all sorts of singular things when properly manipulated. I intend to manipulate them."

Reel was looking at him, fascinated by those flashing eyes. More than ever at that moment he feared this man, who seemed not a man, but a demon. He forgot that the man was his father.

"Well?" he said, with a deep, sighing breath as Boralmo stopped.

"Can you not see the rest?"

"You intend to work those things against Jack Lightfoot?"

"I do. Or rather I shall have the monkey work them for me, or make it seem that the little beast turned the trick."

Again he laughed horribly, making Reel shudder.

"Is it not a pleasant vision?"

"The thought of a fiend," said Reel, hardly knowing that he spoke at all.

"You flatter me!" Boralmo answered. "A fiend is always a creature whose intelligence is more than human."

"When are you going to do this?"

Reel's nervousness in the presence of this man had increased until he almost wanted to scream.

"Don't trouble yourself about that, Reel. To-night I think I shall bunk down here with you. I am in no hurry, and I need rest. Thank your lucky stars that it was I who won that money from you, and keep away from the gaming-table hereafter."

Reel's eyes opened wide in fright.

"But if officers should come for you here, and find you here with me?"

Boralmo's hollow laugh sounded again.

"Never fear, Reel. I know how to take care of myself, and of you, too. You ought to know that you are really safer in my company than when alone."

Then he tipped back in his chair and stared with his fiery eyes at the light; while Reel stared at him until, but for his fear, he would have grown sleepy.

CHAPTER XI.

ICE-YACHTING.

With both ice-boats on the lake next morning, Kid Kennedy, urged by vanity and the comments of his

friends, boldly challenged Jack Lightfoot, who had repaired his boat, and had it brought down there but a few minutes before.

Lafe Lampton and the other Cranford boys were with Jack at the time, and they and Jack had contemplated a spin over the ice on the "flying machine," as Lafe facetiously called it.

Because Kid's boat was larger, and also because in that collision it had wrecked Jack's, Kid believed that his boat was superior in every way.

He did not take into account the fact that it is not always the boat so much as the men who handle it that make for success in a close race.

Moreover, if prejudice and jealousy had not blinded him, he would have been better able to appreciate the fine lines of this ice-yacht of Jack's own making, and have seen that its proportions were those of a flier, even thought its sail area was somewhat less than that of his.

An intense jealousy and hatred of Jack stirred continually in Kid's bosom, blinding him to all of Jack's good qualities—those qualities which had made for Jack so many close friends and admirers.

He had tried to humiliate Jack in various ways without succeeding very well; and had even tried to lead in a hazing trick against Jack, with the mortification of having the hazing trick turned against himself.

So now, when his friends urged him, and in his own heart was the belief that his boat could walk away from Jack's with great ease, he challenged Jack for a race, at the same time sneering at the *Daisy*.

"I hear you made that wonder yourself!" he said. "I suppose that's why it looks like a cross between a rail fence and a hangman's gallows."

Lafe's sky-blue eyes flashed angrily.

"Could you make as good a one, and as handsome a one?"

"If I couldn't, I'd go out somewhere and kick myself."

"Did you make yours?"

"No, I bought it."

"I thought so; and a clumsy thing it is."

"I'll race you," said Jack, smiling.

He had the utmost confidence in the *Daisy*.

He looked round on the gathering crowd, and then his rather fair, though wind-burned, face flushed red; for in the crowd, regarding him closely, he saw Kitty Percival.

He was sorry he had seen her, for now he felt nervous, while before he had felt confident.

He still coveted the good opinion of the bright-faced girl, who was Sid Percival's sister, and whose warm friendship had been his for a time. He seemed to have lost her good opinion, a thing he regretted, though he had not acknowledged it to his friends.

Jack's friends saw her, too.

"She thinks to fluster you by looking at you that way!" said Tom angrily.

Jack turned away without answering. If that was Kitty's intention she had succeeded; but he could not believe it was her intention.

He wished now he had not let himself be driven into this prospective race with Kid Kennedy. He believed she would favor Kennedy's boat. That ought not to make any difference, he felt sure, but at the same time it did make a difference in his feelings.

Besides, though Kid had not yet said who would sail the *Fleetwing* with him, Jack was pretty sure he would choose Sid for one of his crew.

When the sail of the *Fleetwing*—Kid's boat—was hoisted, Jack saw that it was a larger sail than the boat had hitherto carried; and the jib, too, seemed larger. He had not enlarged the sail of the *Daisy*, yet she had a good spread of canvas.

Lafe and Jubal and Tom, and some others of the newer students, held the *Daisy* in place, for she was already straining as if to escape, though the sheets had not yet been made fast.

Now that his challenge had been accepted, Kid Kennedy went about the work of getting the *Fleetwing* ready in a manner that showed he understood his boat.

He chose Sid Percival and Jim Bolt for the cross-beam positions, and Julian Glaze to be in the cockpit with him.

Then he ran the jib-sheet back into the cockpit, where it could be handled by himself and his companion there.

"Get ready!" he said to Jack confidently. "I'm ready to race you, and for money if you want it."

"For fun!" said Jack; and though he laughed he knew that he laughed nervously.

Then he put Jubal and Tom on the cross-beam, and took Lafe into the cockpit with him.

Just before stepping into the cockpit of the *Fleetwing* Kid looked round, and then spoke to Kitty Percival.

"Wouldn't you like to give the signal for the start?" he asked.

Kitty's cheek's flushed to a vivid red.

For a moment she hesitated, then came forward, drawing out her handkerchief.

"That's good," said Kid; "and you must wish us all the luck you can!"

He was trying to irritate Jack, and he succeeded in making him uncomfortable.

Jack gave Kitty a glance, and then looked away; but in that glance he saw again what a beautiful girl she was. Something like anger, which he did not want to confess as such, burned within him.

"Oh, all right—if she wants to favor that tough!" he said to himself.

He looked again, after seating himself and putting his hand on the tiller, while a number of students who favored him held the boat to keep it from flying away. He had to look for the signal which she was to give.

There was a smile on her lips and a bright hectic spot on each cheek.

Then she fluttered her handkerchief.

"Go!" she cried.

The fellows holding the yachts jumped back; there was a sudden lurch, and then the boats were away like the wind.

As they shot toward the center of the lake and there turned to race toward the far end, for the race was to be to the upper end and back, Jubal and Tom found that their positions on the cross-beam were not ones to be envied.

They had to crawl far out to keep the yacht from going over, for the sail bellied under the breeze; and but for the ballast of Jack's weight and Lafe's, the runners would have been fairly lifted from the ice.

The few spectators on the ice cheered lustily as the boats shot away thus together.

Jack was still thinking of Kitty Percival, and in turning to look back to see what she was doing, he let the *Daisy* fall off.

The *Fleetwing* shot by him, and began to lead.

Jack threw the *Daisy* back on her course with such a sudden turn that the cross-beam to which Jubal was clinging flew high in the air.

"Wow!" Jubal bellowed in excitement.

"Hang on!" Jack yelled.

The *Fleetwing* was just ahead, but going like the wind.

Then the *Daisy* straightened out in pursuit, in as pretty a race for the upper end of the lake as was ever seen.

The cheers of the spectators came to Jack's ears, growing fainter and fainter.

The boats were simply flying now.

Suddenly Kid Kennedy's boat lost some of its speed. It had run under the shadow of the woods, and the breeze had, in a measure, been cut off.

Jack saw this.

"Hold hard!" he yelled to the boys on the cross-beam.

Then he shot his ice-yacht farther out into the lake, the end of the cross-beam lifting dangerously; and the wind still holding there, the *Daisy* was up and abreast of the *Fleetwing* by the time the latter reached that spot and again secured the wind.

Then it was nip and tuck and neck and neck.

Jack was a fine sailor, whether of ice-yacht or water-boat. He had not lived so many years beside Cranford Lake without learning those things to perfection

Seeing that he could give his sail a little more breeze without danger of turning the yacht over he did so.

"Now we're doing it!" said Lafe, crouching low and manipulating the jib-sheet. "Now we're flying! Let 'er go!"

His voice rang with excitement.

Jack "let 'er go."

The runners fairly howled on the ice now, and the speed was something startling. The outer end of the cross-beam to which Jubal was clinging rose and fell like the walking-beam of a river steamboat. The wind blew into the faces of the crew with cutting force.

Both boats were flying.

Jack and Lafe bent low, Jack's hand on the tiller and Lafe holding the sheet of the jib, both boys peering ahead. The whizzing runners threw up a scud of ice dust torn from the surface of the ice.

This was a race for blood!

Kid Kennedy realized it quite as well as did Jack and his friends.

Kid had lost when the breeze partially failed him, and his boat was now racing at the side of Jack's.

He tried to give it more speed, thinking to get in ahead of Jack, and, by crossing to the other side, "blanket" the *Daisy's* sail with the *Fleetwing's* larger one, and so put Jack at a disadvantage.

But it was all he could do to hold his own.

Jack had never sailed the *Daisy* better or more swiftly.

He had put behind him all thought of the girl whose actions had so flushed his face and set his heart to beating so unpleasantly at the start.

He had long before learned that no one can do two things at the same time with success, nor think of one thing while devoting, or trying to devote, his entire energies to another.

The winning of this race was the thing that now most concerned him; so to that he now gave all his thought and skill.

They were approaching a more open place, where the hills and the woods fell away.

"Hold hard now!" Jack commanded in a tense voice.

He heard Kid yelling at his crew.

CHAPTER XII.

A GREAT RACE.

Side by side the boats were racing, approaching at frightful speed the upper end of the lake.

Jack held hard on the tiller and Lafe drew on the sheet of the jib.

The wind, strong and singing in that open space, hit the sails.

"Wow!" yelled Jubal, as again his end of the cross-beam rose frightfully in the air.

Jack shouted encouragingly, gave the tiller a shift, and then, with the cross-beam end in the air and the boat flying like a gull, he drew ahead of Kid Kennedy.

He had gained a lead of but a length; for the *Fleetwing* also caught the half-gale blowing there, and Kid knew how to handle his boat.

Behind them they heard the loud roar of the runners of the *Fleetwing*.

"Good-by!" said Jubal, shouting to Kid in a taunting way.

Kid roared at him in a rage.

"Let 'er go!" cried Lafe to Jack. "You'll not turn it over; let 'er go!"

Excitement made Lafe reckless.

The upper end of the lake was at hand.

Jack let his yacht fall off and made the turn, the boom swinging over, and the end of the cross-beam which held Tom now rising in the air.

Kid, farther back, did not run out to the tip-end of the lake.

He made a shorter turn, cutting off distance; and as Jack's yacht swung round Kid's swung in ahead of it.

"By granny, that's a swindle!" Jubal howled in wrath.

It was a rank swindle; but Jack saw that this upper end of the lake was so far from the lower that the spectators there would not be able to declare that it was a fraud—they were too far off now to see well.

He understood Kid's unmanly tactics.

Having dropped behind, Kid hoped by this cheat to get the lead again.

And as the yachts stretched out now for the home run, the *Fleetwing* took the lead, being more than two lengths ahead of the *Daisy*.

Jack's heart burned with anger and his blue-gray eyes flashed.

Lafe and Jubal, and even Tom, were shouting at Kid and the other crew in their anger.

No word came from Jack's lips.

He had a task to perform.

He must beat that other boat, in spite of this handicap; and beat it so cleanly that there could be no dispute as to who had won the race.

Was the *Daisy* equal to that task? The *Fleetwing* was a good boat, with a larger sail area, and Kid had shown masterly ability in handling it.

"Let 'er go!" yelled Lafe, his rage choking him.

On this new tack Jack felt the breeze strike stronger.

He tightened the main-sheet a little more, and spoke a low command to Lafe, who held the jib-sheet.

It was enough.

The cross-beam runner, with Tom over it, rose higher in the air. The *Daisy* seemed to lift herself bodily from the ice. She appeared to be hurled through the air as if caught up by a hurricane.

Kid Kennedy, hearing that humming roar of runners behind him, glanced back, and his face paled when he saw that the *Daisy* was gaining rapidly.

It was a mistake for him to look back, for not only did that sight cause his heart to jump and his nerves to quiver, but a very little turn of the tiller, or a very little tightening or slacking of the main-sheet, has sometimes a tremendous effect.

The *Fleetwing*, in that moment of inattention, yawed, as if about to come up into the wind.

With the roar of a cyclone, the *Daisy* rushed up and passed the *Fleetwing*.

"Let 'er go!" Lafe howled, now jubilantly.

"Let 'er go!" screamed Tom from the lifting cross-beam.

"Craowd 'er—craowd 'er!" squalled Jubal.

Kid's dark face paled. He saw how costly that backward look had been.

All that he had gained by that sharp turning trick at the end of the lake he had lost.

Again the *Fleetwing* was following the *Daisy*, instead of leading.

Savagely and wildly he roared orders to his crew, and the whining roar of the *Fleetwing's* runners came howling now on the wind to the occupants of the boat ahead.

The *Fleetwing* was gaining!

"Let 'er go!" yelled Lafe recklessly.

Then he seemed to be hurled straight up into the air.

The *Daisy's* runners had struck an obstruction in the ice. A small tree limb had been blown on the ice there, and had, by successive freezings and thawings, been sunk below the surface. Yet the place it occupied was rough and ridgy, and at a few points the bark of the limb protruded.

The *Daisy* slewed, and for an instant it seemed that she would go over.

But Jack shifted the tiller and slacked the main-sheet with the quickness of thought, thus letting the boat right herself.

But in the delay the speed of the yacht had fallen off.

Kid Kennedy saw what Jack had encountered.

He shifted tiller and sheet; and, coming up as with a jump and a roar, the *Fleetwing* passed the obstruction safely.

Before the *Daisy* could gather speed again, the *Fleetwing* was once more in the lead.

Jack's face paled and his eyes became unnaturally bright.

The lower end of the lake was being approached rapidly.

The boats were going like the wind, and but a little while would finish the race. It began to seem that the *Fleetwing* would win.

Again, though he had resolved to put her out of his mind, came a thought of Kitty Percival.

Jack saw the crowd cheering on the ice and waving hands and handkerchiefs. In the midst of that crowd were the bright dresses of girls. And he knew that Kitty was there.

A bellow of triumph came from the lips of Kid Kennedy. He felt sure of victory now.

"Catch me if you can!" he yelled in glee.

Jack heard Lafe groan with disappointment, and he heard Jubal roaring something.

Then Jack took a new grip of himself.

"Hold hard!" he shouted.

Once more the tiller shifted, as he glanced at the burgee flying at the masthead and showing the direction of the wind. He tightened the sheet of the mainsail and gave an order to Lafe for the manipulation of the jib-sheet.

"Hold hard!" he yelled, in a louder voice.

Only a little is needed when the wind is right to make a vast difference in the sailing speed of an ice-yacht.

But the yacht must be handled at such a time by a competent man, or dire results may follow. It is ticklish business and requires high skill.

Now the *Daisy* seemed once more caught in the wings of a cyclone and hurled forward.

"Hold hard!" Jack yelled to the boys on the cross-beam.

Kid looked back, making his former mistake, and his eyes grew frightened.

No "Flying Dutchman" ever had such speed. The *Daisy* was going sixty miles an hour. Her runners whined and screamed; the cross-beam to which Tom was clinging desperately rose high in air; and the entire yacht seemed to have been picked up bodily by the wind.

Kid tightened his sheet recklessly.

This was simply flying.

But now yard by yard the *Daisy* gained.

She drew up abeam, with Jubal yelling like a maniac.

She increased her gain.

The land seemed to be flung at the boats, so terrific was the speed.

"Hold hard!" Jack yelled.

His face was now hot and his eyes shining, but his nerves and muscles were as steel.

"Hold hard!"

The *Daisy* drew ahead, ever so slightly. She increased her gain. Then she passed the *Fleetwing,* throwing ice dust from her runners into the eyes of Kid Kennedy and his crew.

The crowd of spectators could now be heard yelling.

As through a blurry haze Jack beheld the waving of hats and handkerchiefs. The whining roar of the runners almost drowned the noise of the yelling.

He was in the lead—the *Daisy* was leading!

"Wow! Le 'er go!" howled Jubal.

The *Daisy* was doing her best, and that best was excellent.

Another shift of the tiller in the same direction, or a further tightening of the main-sheet, would have turned her over.

Then the yelling of the spectators seemed to be thrown into the faces of the *Daisy's* crew.

The shore was at hand.

Right behind came Kid's boat, he and his crew trying desperately to recover their lost ground.

Jack did not look back. With muscles of iron he held the *Daisy* to her course.

And then came the sharp turn, and the rounding up to the starting-point.

Here Kid tried to cut in again and shorten the distance, as he had done at the other end of the lake.

But the trick could be seen now, and even if by it he had succeeded in putting the *Fleetwing* first at the starting-place it would not have availed him, for every one would have been a witness of the cheat.

But he did not get the *Fleetwing* first at the starting-point.

The *Daisy* slipped into that position, while the *Fleetwing,* in spite of the unfair advantage Kid tried to take, was still two lengths behind.

Jack brought the *Daisy* into the wind with sails flapping, after the starting-line had been crossed.

His face was hot as fire and his heart was jumping.

Jubal was howling out his delight, and Lafe was making sundry remarks not complimentary to the opposing crew.

Tom was as silent as Jack, and his face was as flushed. The winning of that race had meant a great deal to Tom Lightfoot.

The yelling crowd swarmed forward as by a common impulse.

Foremost among them was Kitty Percival, waving her hand.

"You won!" she shouted to Jack.

And Jack could not tell whether she was pleased by that fact or displeased. He only knew that his arms and his whole body ached from the strain of that race.

But Kid Kennedy was raging. To him that defeat was as bitter as gall and wormwood.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEED OF A FIEND.

Jack Lightfoot had not forgotten the danger he believed he was placed in by the presence of Boralmo in Seagirt.

Taking counsel with Tom and the others, he had laid Mack Remington's letter before the police, and had stated why he feared Boralmo.

The police had gone to Reel Snodgrass' room in the hotel, where Reel had met them quietly, and on being

shown the letter had angrily denounced Jack, declaring that he had not seen the man known as Boralmo and did not believe he had ever been in Seagirt. He branded the whole thing as an attempt on Jack's part to injure him.

A search of the town resulted in nothing. Boralmo was not found. The man with the haunting eyes who had hired Kid Kennedy's ice-yacht had disappeared.

Notwithstanding all this, Jack had a feeling that his peril was a very real one, and he took what seemed needed precautions.

He kept one or more of his Cranford friends with him nearly all the time.

News of this came to Kid Kennedy and his gang, and they laughed loud and sneeringly at Jack's "cowardice."

They claimed they had long known that Jack was a coward, and here was proof of it. They said he was afraid of his shadow. And, besides, they declared they were not sure this was not a cock-and-bull story told by Jack for the purpose of drawing attention to himself. According to their professed belief, Jack Lightfoot was a great "advertiser," and never let slip a chance to do something eccentric and out of the ordinary to gain a little cheap notoriety.

Jack pursued the even tenor of his way. He knew what he had to fear.

But how can one guard successfully against such a man as Boralmo?

A week went by and Boralmo had been neither seen nor heard of. He had vanished like the mist of morning. Jack began to think that he had left Seagirt.

Then, one evening, after the shadows of night had fallen, blue-coated Gregory Smoot came to Jack with the information that Professor Conquest wished to see him a few moments in the laboratory.

Jack was not thinking of Boralmo at the time, but wondered if this call from Conquest had anything to do with the alarm-clock and bottle episode in the lecture-room. One of the alarm-clocks, it will be remembered, belonged to Jack, and the manner in which it had been taken from his room had never been cleared up.

Jack was sitting alone, "boning" at his chemistry, when Smoot called. Conquest had given the chemistry class some extra pages of work that day.

"Tell him that I'll be right down," said Jack.

He put away his book, and getting his cap and outer coat followed Smoot in a short time.

The laboratory door was open, and glancing through it as he approached he saw the glow of a fire apparently burning under a crucible.

When he was in the room he beheld what he took to be the form of the professor bending over the crucible where the fire glowed.

Jack walked on now without a thought of peril.

But as he came up to the figure that bent over the crucible, it turned like a flash, and the fiery eyes of Boralmo were revealed.

Jack stumbled back with a low cry, which was cut short by the grip of Boralmo's ironlike fingers on his throat.

"Ah-h!" he heard Boralmo gurgle.

As is known, Jack Lightfoot was an all-round young athlete, with rather phenomenal strength for one of his size, and it was not his nature to submit without a desperate fight.

He tried to cry out, and tried also to strike Boralmo in the face and make him release his hold.

Boralmo pushed Jack against the wall by the crucible, tightening his deadly grip; and though Jack fought now like a madman, the effect of that terrific choking, combined with the overwhelming surprise, rendered his efforts of little effect.

Boralmo had all the phenomenal strength of a madman.

The bones of Jack's neck seemed to crack under that pressure.

Still fighting, or trying to fight, Jack sank to the floor by the wall, borne down by Boralmo, with his sight blurring and his senses going.

A vision of blood flowed across his staring eyeballs, strange singing and cracking sounds were in his ears, and his pent lungs seemed bursting.

Then he lost consciousness.

Boralmo did not trouble to tie him.

He dragged Jack's senseless form behind the shadowy angle of the wall, where the light from the crucible could not reach, and threw him down there.

"Ten thousand curses on you!" he cried savagely, choking out the words in a low voice and panting heavily, for Jack had fought like a fiend.

Then he kicked the unconscious form to relieve his spite.

Having thus temporarily disposed of his enemy, Boralmo took the ends of two electric light wires which he had already cut, and brought them together near a section of the wooden wall, placing them so that when he turned on the current they would begin to eat with fiery teeth into the woodwork and burn the building.

Having done that, he heaped together near Jack some of the explosives which Professor Conquest had shown him, and ran a section of powder fuse into the heap.

Not content with this, he placed there some large bottles filled with explosive chemicals which Conquest had also been unwise enough to exhibit to him.

The explosion of the powder would break the bottles, and if that powder did not do for Jack, the fumes of the chemicals would render it impossible for him to live long after their contents had been touched by fire.

Having done this, Boralmo drew the monkey up, squeaking, from some point in the darkness.

It seemed to have almost human intelligence now, and to know from his manner that he contemplated something terrible concerning it.

And so it began to fight, as viciously as Jack had fought.

It scratched and clawed and tried to get the collar of the chain from about its neck, chattering in fear.

Becoming impatient, Boralmo struck it a blow that stretched it out on the floor.

"Lay there and roast, with that other devil!" he snarled in savage rage.

He drew a knife and stabbed furiously at the monkey's body.

Jack Lightfoot heard Boralmo's angry exclamation. He was struggling back to life; and, as he heard it, he saw, with bloodshot and staring eyes that held a wild and bewildered look, the stabbbing blow of the knife.

Though choked into insensibility, Jack's wonderful strength was already drawing him back to consciousness.

But he seemed paralyzed. He saw dimly, like one who is half blind, and he heard faintly, as one hears who is far away. The whole thing seemed a terrible and bloody vision, more like a frightful dream than a reality. He was numb all over, and for a moment or two was sure he was suffering from some horrible nightmare.

So, though he saw Boralmo, and heard him, and beheld the flash of the knife, it was like a section of phantasmagoria in which his senses were playing him a trick.

Boralmo did not look again in his direction; and in Jack's peculiar mental state, seeing but a side view of the man, Jack for the moment thought he was Professor Conquest. Boralmo wore Conquest's coat and hat, had made up to resemble Conquest, and had done the work so well that he had fooled even Gregory Smoot.

Boralmo now turned his back on Jack and the crucible, and on the monkey, and fled softly through the half darkness toward the door.

As he did so he turned on the electric current that fed the wires which he had united against the woodwork.

Jack Lightfoot, still in a daze of half consciousness, saw a little flame spring up there.

He stared at it, not comprehending what it meant, and having no just recollection of what happened to him.

The flame increased and the woodwork began to crackle.

Jack heard a heavy fall somewhere not far off, and was impressed with the feeling that the man who had assaulted him had fallen there.

Still, so strange was his mental state that at the same time he was wondering if he had been assaulted, or if this were a dream.

But when the flame flashed higher, emitting electric sparks, and these sparks seemed to shoot out toward him, Jack came to a sudden realization of what it meant.

Filled with a sense of horror, with this return of full consciousness, he tried to lift himself.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN PERIL OF HIS LIFE.

The light from this fire, hid from the front doorway by the angle of the wall where Jack lay, revealed to him the body of the monkey on the floor.

Jack did not know whether the little animal was dead or only unconscious.

But the sight of that small form lying so quiet, with the little cap and the green feather on the floor, stirred him as even his own peril did not.

He tried again to lift himself, and tried to crawl toward the monkey.

His head felt giddy and his stomach sick, and queer, red spots flickered before his eyes. His whole body had a numb, dead feeling.

As he thus struggled, and found he could do nothing, a fear that he was paralyzed smote him.

He tried to cry out, but his tongue, hot and dry, stuck in his mouth.

He was like one who, in the face of a great danger, stands rooted in his tracks and cannot help himself; or, like the helpless bird, fascinated by the serpent, which the old stories used to tell about.

It was a horrible sensation.

But as Jack struggled this began to pass somewhat, and he found himself able to crawl a little. It was not much, but it gave him strength and gave an increase of hope.

But now he turned toward that flashing fire in the woodwork, seeing that it was caused by electric wires united and imbedded there in an ingenious way—crossed wires whose flame was eating a hole in the wood.

Jack fell forward, prostrate, as he tried to rise and walk toward that growing fire.

As he fell he saw that something resembling a sputtering fiery snake was creeping across the floor.

It was coming in his direction; and he realized soon that it was a lighted powder fuse.

It was flashing spitefully and making a steady advance, and Jack's common sense told him that it was approaching explosives.

He knew that Professor Conquest experimented with explosives, as well as with many other dangerous things, in that laboratory.

As he lay there, for the moment unable to rise again,

his gaze fixed in fascination on the sputtering advance of the fuse, the conviction that the man who had attacked him was not Conquest returned; and then the recollection of Boralmo's fiery eyes came back, as they had looked at him when Boralmo clutched him by the throat.

Knowing now that he had without doubt run again into the power of that human fiend, Jack made another great effort.

He summoned all his waning strength and all his tremendous energy and will power, and half dragging himself across the floor he reached the point where the fire sputtered in the woodwork.

With his waning strength he tore the wires apart, scorching his hands, and hurled the severed ends to the floor.

As he did so the fuse that spat like a fiery-headed snake made a sudden and frightful advance.

Jack tried to reach it, with the determination of smothering it in his hands.

As he stumbled toward it his strength seemed going again, and he fell.

When he arose it had passed the point where he lay and was leaping toward the corner from which he had dragged himself.

It was suicide, in his weakened condition, to try to stop it now.

Therefore, again summoning his strength, he stumbled toward the monkey, whose dim outline he saw near the crucible.

He reached it and again fell forward, his body tumbling in behind the crucible and its furnace.

Even as he fell a terrific explosion sounded.

It was like the ripping up of the earth.

Jack was hurled forward in the direction of the outer door, and away from the deadly corner where the explosives and those bottles of chemicals had been placed.

Loud shouts sounded in his dulled ears.

Then followed a trampling of feet, and he was pulled and half lifted by strong arms.

In another moment he saw the fire roaring red behind him in the laboratory, and knew he was being carried out of the building.

The one who carried him ran, as if Jack's body were no burden at all.

He dashed through the doorway, which was open.

Jack gasped as he felt the cold outside air pulsate against his hot face.

Then he felt other hands seize him and heard other voices.

In a minute or less he had again returned to consciousness, and found himself lying in the snow out in the yard.

A great light flamed behind him, and many people were running.

It seemed again a part of that awful phantasmagoria.

"All right, old man?"

The voice was Lafe Lampton's.

Jack stirred and tried to sit up.

"Yes—yes," he gasped. "In there—in there!"

He staggered almost to his feet.

Lafe and Tom held him by the arms. It was Lafe who had rescued him. And Jubal was doing what he could to help.

"In there!" said Jack, gasping, for his tongue was still stiff and his throat felt stiff and paralyzed. "The—monkey—and the—man——"

Then he fell forward, in spite of the supporting arms, his strength gone and his brain reeling.

* * * * * * *

Some hours later Jack Lightfoot came back to himself in his own room.

Tom was there, and Lafe and Jubal, and the lamp was burning.

"Gee!" he gasped, sitting up in bed. "I've had an awful dream!"

Lafe rose from his chair with a sudden jump, and both he and Tom came over to the bed.

"Are you all right, old man?" Lafe asked, in a tone of trembling joy.

Jubal came to the foot of the bed with anxious face; and Tom caught Jack's hand in his own and seemed to be feeling the pulse with as much care as if he were a doctor.

"An awful dream!" said Jack.

"It was an awful dream, old man," said Lafe; "but still, you know, it wasn't a dream!"

Jack seemed to want to climb right out of bed then, but Lafe held him back with strong hand.

"The laboratory is gone," said Tom. "We just got you out in time."

"But the man and the monkey?" Jack gasped.

"By granny! what was it abaout that?" demanded Jubal. "You kept talking abaout the man and the monkey."

"Was Boralmo in there?" asked Tom suspiciously.

"Yes," said Jack. "No, don't hold me; I'm all right!"

He pushed Lafe away and sat up on the edge of the bed.

"Boralmo was in there when I went to the laboratory in answer to that summons of Professor Conquest."

"Great hemlock!" said Jubal. "We didn't know nothin' abaout that."

"Smoot brought me word that Conquest wanted to see me in the laboratory. I went; and I thought I saw him over by that crucible where you've seen him work so many times. But the man I thought was him was Boralmo!"

"Jiminy crickets!" Lafe exclaimed.

"Go on," said Tom anxiously.

"He wore Professor Conquest's hat and coat, and when I stepped up he turned on me and caught me by the throat. We had a fight, but he was too much for me, and he threw me over in the corner. I come round in a little while, and saw a fire sputtering in the woodwork, where he had set two crossed electric light wires. Then I saw a powder fuse flashing across the room."

"By gum! Hear that!" Jubal was sputtering.

"But before that, I think it was, I saw the monkey. He attacked it, or it attacked him, and then he struck at it with a knife."

"Did he kill it?" Tom asked, horrified.

"I don't know. It lay on the floor as if it was dead. I made a great effort and got to the electric light wires and pulled them apart. Then I tried to stop the advance of the powder fuse. I failed in that, and then tried to get to the monkey. I fell there; and right after that came the explosion, which threw me toward the door. Then Lafe rushed in and grabbed me—I think it was Lafe."

"It was Lafe, all right!" said Tom.

"I saw the fire in there, after hearing the explosion," Lafe explained. "I happened to be out in the yard. In fact, I was looking for you at the time. When I jumped in at the door I saw some one rolling on the floor. I didn't just know whether it was you or not at first, but I was under contract to get whoever it was out of there, and I did."

His eyes were shining and his chest heaving.

"So that was how it came about," said Tom.

"Jiminy crickets—Boralmo!" cried Lafe.

"And I bet, by granny! that feller got away!" exclaimed Jubal.

"That's what I wanted to tell you of," said Jack, "but it keeps going from me. Some one fell, in there—a man fell—or, at least, I thought it was a man. That was before I pulled those wires away and before the explosion."

"Boralmo?" said Tom.

"I thought so; I don't know."

"Well, if he didn't get aout of there he was roasted," said Jubal, "fer that whole laboratory went up in smoke."

"No other buildings were burned?"

"No; they got the fire-ingine here and put the thing aout, but it's a heap of smoldering ruins, jest the same."

* * * * * * *

The next day Jack was able to leave his room and take a look at those ruins.

Professor Conquest was out there, shaking his head mournfully, but already planning for the building of another laboratory.

"It's a queer thing," he said, turning to Jack. "Tell me all about it."

Jack told him.

"Well, there wasn't any monkey bones or body found," said Conquest. "The body of a monkey is so small that it may have been consumed entirely. But there was the skeleton of a man dug out of the ashes."

"Boralmo!" Jack gasped.

He stared at his friends who were with him.

"We can't be sure of that," said Conquest, putting his finger to his forehead in the old way. "You see, the truth is, I used to keep a human skeleton in there. I haven't seen it for a year, perhaps; and, really, I don't know whether it was in there when this fire occurred or not. My memory is so treacherous that it fails me on that point."

"You don't know where it was?" said Jack to this astounding statement.

"No, I don't; and I don't know but I sold it more than a year ago. I did sell some skeletons at that time; and I'm not sure but that I sold that one."

"Now, what do you think of that?" said Tom, as they turned away from the bewildered professor.

"By granny, if I had a memory like that I'd throw it away and buy a new one!" Jubal grumbled.

One thing was made certain, however, by investigation.

Reel Snodgrass had departed hastily from Seagirt, and where he had gone to no one could tell.

Another thing was made certain in a day or two.

Kid Kennedy's petty attempt to get Jack into trouble by placing Jack's alarm-clock in Conquest's lecture-room failed utterly.

An investigation which Professor Chubb started came so perilously near to convicting Kid of doing the thing that Kid was thrown into a sweaty panic.

But the actual proof failed, and Kid was safe, though he felt that his reputation with Chubb and the other professors had been damaged.

THE END.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

The All-Sports Library has been consolidated with the Tip Top Weekly. No more numbers will be issued. We confidently recommend the Tip Top Weekly to all of our readers not already acquainted with that peerless publication. A new series of stories is just starting in which the famous Frank Merriwell opens a school of athletic development. All of Frank's old friends and comrades reappear in new roles. Don't miss this treat, boys! Shake hands with Frank Merriwell when you say good-by to All-Sports. Read Tip Top Weekly No. 512, "Frank Merriwell's New Idea; or, The American School of Athletic Development."

PRICE, FIVE CENTS PER COPY.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

To the Readers of All-Sports Library

YOU may or may not have noticed the first number of an excellent new series published in the TIP TOP WEEKLY, No. 512, in which the famous hero, Frank Merriwell, opens a school of athletic development.

It has always been our desire to give the readers of ALL-SPORTS the *best* tales of adventure in the athletic field. We had hoped to raise our stories to the TIP TOP level, but after reading one or two numbers of the series referred to above, we plainly see that this is impossible. Mr. Burt L. Standish's stories defy competition.

Therefore, ALL-SPORTS will be discontinued with the present number (56) and we take occasion to earnestly request all of our readers to transfer their allegiance to the TIP TOP WEEKLY, because we feel that the adventures of Frank, his old friends, who act as instructors, and his pupils, will satisfy the athletic boy as no other publication can ever hope to do.

THE WINNER LIBRARY COMPANY,
NEW YORK.

Recent issues of the TIP TOP WEEKLY beginning with the Physical Culture School:

512—FRANK MERRIWELL'S NEW IDEA;
or, The American School of Athletic Development.

513—FRANK MERRIWELL'S TROUBLES;
or, Enemies of the School.

514—FRANK MERRIWELL'S PUPILS;
or, The Wizards of Water Polo.

515—DICK MERRIWELL'S SATISFACTION;
or, Hot Work at indoor Baseball.

For sale by all newsdealers at 5 cents per copy, or will be sent postpaid upon receipt of price by STREET & SMITH, the publishers.

HOW TO DO THINGS

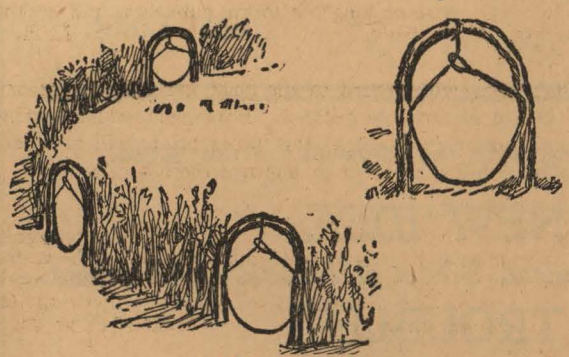
By AN OLD ATHLETE.

Timely essays and hints upon various athletic sports and pastimes in which our boys are usually deeply interested, and told in a way that may be easily understood. Instructive articles may be found in back numbers of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, as follows: No. 31, "How to Make a Cheap Skiff." No. 32, "Archery." No. 33, "Cross-Country Running." No. 34, "The Game of Lacrosse." No. 35, "The Boy With a Hobby for Collecting." No. 36, "Football, and How to Play It." No. 37, "A Practice Game." No. 38, "How to Play Football—Training." No. 39, "The Men in the Line." No. 40, "The Men Behind." No. 41, "Signal Systems," No. 42, "Team Play." No. 43, "The End of the Season." No. 44, "A Gymnasium Without Apparatus." (I.) No. 45, "A Gymnasium Without Apparatus." (II.) No. 46, "Bag-Punching." No. 47, "Camping." No 48, "Cruising in Small Boats." No. 49, "Snow-Shoe and Skee Work." No. 50. "How to Make and Use a Toboggan." No. 51, "Tip-Ups for Pickerel Fishing Through the Ice." No. 52, Winter Sports. No. 53, "Fancy Skating." No. 54, "How to Build and Sail an Ice-Boat." No. 55, "The Game of Ice Hockey."

TRAPS AND THE BUILDING OF TRAPS.

Every boy at some time or other likes to play the mighty hunter and trapper. He would prefer to go after bear, wildcat, and other large game, but generally compromises on catching rabbits, chipmunks, squirrels, and kindred animals. The city boy, as well as his country cousin, takes infinite delight in making his own traps. There seems to be something about all forms of outdoor recreation that makes one feel he is getting more real enjoyment when he does everything himself. A home-made pole, for instance, possesses greater attractions for the young fisherman than one just come from the store. So it is in the matter of traps. I can remember my first one. It was made out of three pieces of wood and a jack-knife. It was known as the "figure four," a simple contrivance which will be explained to you later.

More boys spend their spare hour after school making traps than those whose constructive ability leads them to



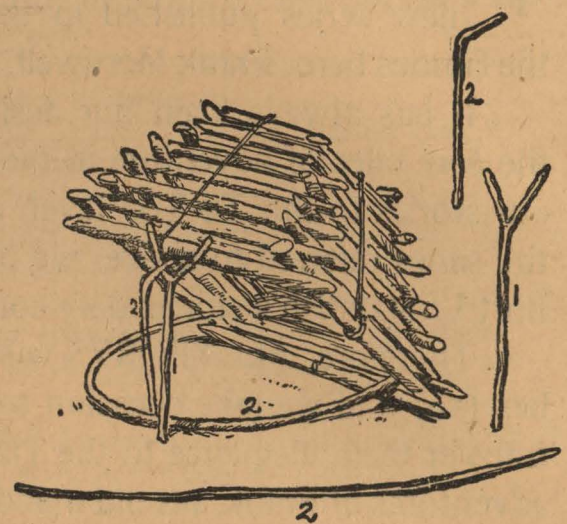
PARTRIDGE SNARES

more ambitious work like boat-building and canoe-making. In the first place, it does not take so much of a young man's pocket-money for material, and then again, a saw, hammer, and jack-knife meet the requirements of the youthful carpenter whose limited use of tools make him hesitate about attempting anything very elaborate.

A rainy day generally means a busy one for the boy who lives in the country or in the suburbs, and the barn or the wagon-house resounds with the noise of hammer and saw from morning till night. If there is an obliging uncle stopping with the family at the time, his services are usually called into requisition, and he may be seen the center of a group of cross-questioning nephews eliciting all the information they can about the methods he used in his trap-building days.

The different kinds of snares for catching birds will be described first; after that we will tell you about some of the simple traps used for catching small animals like moles, etc.

For quail, prairie-chicken, and partridge a piece of string is all that an ingenious boy needs who is familiar with the habits of his game. As you know, partridges will not fly except when they see no other way left to get away from an enemy, and will run through the stubble depending on their inconspicuous coat to blend with the surrounding vegetation and hide them from their pursuer. Knowing this characteristic of the birds, you can make the following trap and set it near a spot frequented



HEN-COOP TRAP

by them with a good chance of capturing a few of the toothsome delicacies, when the law allows.

With a piece of fish-line, or ordinary string, tie a slip-noose knot, and place it in an arched stick as shown in Illustration I. The free end of the string should be tied to the top of the trap. To keep the loop open as much as possible, cut notches on each side of the arch and push the string into the wood.

A slight pressure of a penknife will do this. If you have the string too tight the noose will not slide easily when a bird gets ensnared in it. Make a circular fence of sticks and matted leaves about four or five inches high on the feeding-ground of the partridge, and set several traps like the one just described at intervals of, say, three feet. The unsuspecting bird will come to pick up the bait in this enclosure, and when it pokes its head into the arch containing the noose will try to push forward instead of backing out. The more it tries to force its way the more it will get entangled in the string.

A much simpler snare can be made by driving two small stakes in the ground, about two feet from each other, and tying between them a fish-line upon which you have fastened loops of horsehair. Sprinkle some seed, bread crumbs, or other food likely to attract the birds close to the snare, and then hide near-by and watch for them to take the bait. In using a trap of this kind it is always best to remain close by so that the birds can be released at once, for, if left to themselves, they will beat their wings in an effort to get away, with the result that they might die on your hands before you could get home with them. Use a cloth bag, having air-holes in the sides, to carry them in. Unless they are kept from the light

(*Continued on page 30.*)

A CHAT WITH YOU

Under this general head we purpose each week to sit around the camp-fire, and have a heart-to-heart talk with those of our young readers who care to gather there, answering such letters as may reach us asking for information with regard to various healthy sports, both indoor and out. We should also be glad to hear what you think of the leading characters in your favorite publication. It is the editor's desire to make this department one that will be eagerly read from week to week by every admirer of the Jack Lightfoot stories, and prove to be of valuable assistance in building up manly, healthy Sons of America. All letters received will be answered immediately, but may not appear in print under five weeks, owing to the fact that the publication must go to press far in advance of the date of issue. Those who favor us with correspondence will please bear this in mind, and exercise a little patience. THE EDITOR.

Having been an interested reader of your excellent weekly, I take the privilege to write to you. I would like to correspond with the reader who signs himself "Hannibal." He seems to be a fellow after my own heart. I think ALL-SPORTS and *Tip Top* are the two best weeklies published. I think I like the *Tip Top* best, probably, as "Hannibal" says, the characters seem like old friends to us. They do to me, at least. And concerning "that weekly" that "Hannibal" wrote about, he forgot to say that the people, especially the boys, looked to him as a king. They did not seem his equal; they even were afraid to talk to him. I hope this catches the eyes of "Hannibal." I sign my full name, CONRAD M. RICHTER.

Tremont, Pa.

It seems up to you, "Hannibal," to accept this challenge, and write to this enthusiastic ALL-SPORTS admirer.

I wish you all a very merry Xmas and a happy New-year. I have read ALL-SPORTS from No. 1 through 46, but will not express myself until I have read fifty-two, or a year's numbers. Suffice to say now that I will have them bound, at that time, in semi-yearlies, full leather. I have a favor I would like to ask of you.

Having written a short analysis of every number of ALL-SPORTS, I would like, for the benefit of those who have not read the early numbers, to send the analysis of five numbers a week, so as not to use up all Chat space, for you to publish. Would you be willing to do this, as a favor to me?

HENRY A. DE MASI.

648 South Chicago Street, Joliet, Ill.

We should be pleased to read what you have written, and, if it does not occupy too much space, we might publish. Our "Cast of Characters," given each week, is meant for the convenience and information of new readers, and we believe it is appreciated.

As I have read every number of the famous ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, I thought I would express my opinion of the stories and characters.

The greatest surprise of all, for me, is what I read in No. 46, that Jack is going to Harvard as soon as he is through with the high. I thought that Jack was going to enter Yale, because most of the others do; but I suppose Mr. Stevens knows what he is about. I can see some hot times ahead when Jack Lightfoot goes against Dick Merriwell.

I like the stories very much, and think that every number is better than the preceding one.

Jack Lightfoot is a good leader and athlete.

Lafe Lampton reminds me of Obed Tubbs, because the only difference I can see between them is that Lafe eats apples and Obed pies.

Tom is a dandy, and so are Phil, Jubal, Jerry, Bob Brewster, and Brodie Strawn.

I have influenced a few readers of weeklies to take the ALL-SPORTS and *Tip Top*, and now they cannot go without them. They all say that they will read them as long as they are published.

I would like to correspond with any readers, or exchange postals. Will return favors as soon as received.

I hope that ALL-SPORTS will be published for years, and that this letter may be printed in your Chat column.

Wishing good luck and long life to Jack L., Mr. Stevens, the Winner Library Company, and ALL-SPORTS readers,

6 Kendall Street, Lawrence, Mass. ALFRED W. THOMAS.

You see we have complied with your request, Alfred; and, indeed, it is our aim to answer each and every letter that is written to us in good faith. That is one of an editor's duties, and when his readers are as universally enthusiastic as those of ALL-SPORTS seem to be, the duty becomes a pleasure indeed.

I noticed, in a recent number of ALL-SPORTS, where a reader made a suggestion that Jack Lightfoot go to a preparatory school before going to college.

I think it would be a great improvement in the stories. Why not have him go to Phillips-Exeter, or some other well-known preparatory school?

Just think of the fine stories which could be written about Jack and his friends while at a large preparatory school; and I am sure Mr. Stevens would make them the most interesting of any stories written.

I see that Brodie Strawn is becoming one of Jack's closest friends, and I hope in time to see him become Jack's chum.

I should like to see the publishers of ALL-SPORTS start another athletic weekly, where they have made such a success with ALL-SPORTS, for there cannot be too many such papers published.

I have often thought that if the boys who spend so much money for cigarettes, would only invest it in such good reading-matter as ALL-SPORTS, how much better it would be.

I will close now, wishing long life to the publishers and author of ALL-SPORTS. Yours truly, L. H.

Danforth, Me.

Your suggestion with regard to the good use cigarette money could be put to is certainly sensible. Boys need athletic training, and reading stories such as this paper prints will be likely to arouse an ambition in them to improve their bodily health.

Though I have written before, I could not help writing again to speak of your splendid weekly. I think it is the best book for boys I ever read. It seems to be getting better and better week after week. I think Mr. Stevens is a "peach" for writing the good old ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY. MARTIN FLEMING.

Sunbury, Pa.

We thank you, Martin, for your kind sentiments, and only regret that lack of space will not allow us to publish the song you sent, praising your favorite paper.

I thought I would write a few lines to the Applause column. In letting my boy friends read my ALL-SPORTS, I have had to replace several to keep my collection. I think ALL-SPORTS the real thing, and if *Tip Top* ever had a rival it has one in ALL-SPORTS. I like all the characters in your weekly, especially Jack and Lafe. I think Jack is a true moral character, in whose footsteps any boy will be safe in following; and of the girls, Nellie is my choice. I think she is the girl for Jack. Hoping this will escape the waste-basket, I will close, with three cheers for Mr. Stevens. A true admirer of Nellie Connor,

Morgantown, W. Va. J. O. W.

This has the true ring, and we can only say that J. O. W. must be a generous lad to loan his beloved ALL-SPORTS when he cherishes his file so much.

Being an ardent reader of your famous weekly, I am taking the privilege of voicing my opinion and to ask some advice. I have read all of the stories from 1 up to date, and can say that with just one exception, it is the best I have ever had the pleasure of reading. Of course that exception is *Tip Top;* but I suppose the reason I like it better is because I have been reading it for about four years. About the time your weekly was launched, I noticed another weekly which was supposed to deal on athletics. I read this weekly for a couple of weeks, and I must say that it was about the worst case of fake I ever bumped up against. You can bet I do not read it now. Here are my measurements: Around neck, 13¼ inches; across shoulders, 17 inches; chest, natural, 34 inches; inflated, 37 inches; waist, 32 inches; thigh, 21 inches; arm, straight out, 12 inches; flexed, 14 inches; calf, 14 inches; ankles, 10 inches; height, 5 feet 7 inches; weight, 128 pounds; age, 15 years 7 months. 1. Are my measurements good? 2. What are my good ones? 3. My bad ones? 4. Please give me some good exercises that go toward making a good wrestler, as that is my favorite pastime, I also like baseball and football. I am catcher on our baseball team, and center on the football team. With best wishes for a prosperous year to the author and publishers, I remain,

Greensburg, Pa. I. M. SATISFIED (with your weekly).

For your height you should measure about thirty-six inches around the chest, and it is up to you to gain that additional two inches at once. Otherwise, in weight and other things, you seem able to deliver the goods. A sound chest is a great thing for a lad, and, with proper training, you should not experience any difficulty in reaching a peg or two above your present measurement.

One of Spalding's little athletic books on wrestling will give you the information you desire.

Knowing the large circulation of ALL-SPORTS, I take the opportunity to say, through its correspondence page, that I am collecting souvenir post-cards and will exchange with any person in any town, city, State, or country. In closing, I will say that the Lightfoot stories are second to none in comparison with any stories published.

Hoping the author has a long and successful career, I will ring off, THOS. G. HOUSTON.

5816 Alder Street, Pittsburg, Pa.

(***"How to do Things"***)—*Continued from page 28.*

they will continue to beat their wings till the poor creatures lose every feather.

Another trap that can be easily made looks like a hen-coop. Whittle pieces of green stick different lengths and build up a sort of pyramid, such as you see in the second illustration. Tie a stout piece of twine in the middle of the lower rung, and then bring it up over the top and around to the other side, tying the free end of the string to the stick opposite the first one. This is for the purpose of keeping the "coop" from falling apart. This method is much easier than using nails, and will give as satisfactory results. Now bend a piece of willow in a half-circle and tie the ends to the corners. Make sure that the arch does not extend beyond the lower area of the coop. Get two forked sticks about three inches long and cut off the fork of one of them.

Raise the coop the height of the stick having the two forks, and thrust the end of the other stick through the two-forked stick. Place these so that the willow arch comes between them an inch from the ground. A bird hopping on the willow pushes it down and dislodges the two sticks so that the coop loses its support. It immediately falls, enclosing the bird before it has a chance to fly away. All you need in the way of tools for making this simple trap is a jack-knife, or a small hatchet.

To catch members of the furry tribe you will have to use traps of a different make, requiring considerably more time to be properly constructed. The "figure four" looks just like what it is called, and is made out of three sticks notched as you see in the next illustration. Cut the notches as shown in the separate parts of the trap marked "A," "B," and "C." The long horizontal piece of wood is known as the trigger. When this is deranged in any way the other sticks are released, with the result that the whole structure falls to the ground. In catching a mole, for instance, set up your figure four where you know the animal is likely to come, and place a board on the trap so that one end will rest on the top of the figure four and the other on the ground. Place a large stone on the lower end so that the board will fall quickly when the trigger is released. Drive several sharp nails through the center of the board directly over the burrow that the mole will have to pass through. A trap of this kind is known as a deadfall, and, while it might seem cruel to use it, there are occasions when you would be justified.

A novel way of catching field-mice is to take an old molasses jug, knock a hole in one side big enough for an animal the size of a mouse to pass through, and bury it in the ground so that only the mouth projects above

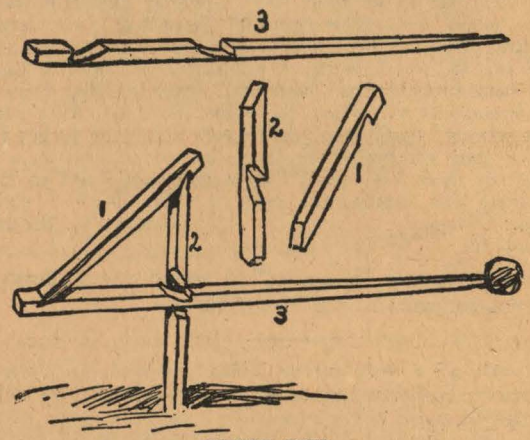


FIGURE FOUR

the surface. Make a little passageway of earth sloping down to the hole in the jug. The mouse will crawl in the underground passage after the bait, whereas it would be afraid to go near the hole if it were in the light above the surface.

Ask your mother to give you an old marmalade jar. When you tell her that you are going to catch all the mice in the pantry she will not hesitate to comply with your request. Put a cover of stiff brown paper over the mouth of the jar and mark it with two lines drawn from the sides in the shape of a cross. Insert the tip of a penknife an inch from the center, and cut the paper along the pencil-mark. Repeat the operation with the line crossing the one just cut. This will leave four small flaps in the center of the paper directly over the middle of the jar, and make an opening for the "game" to drop into the trap. Suspend a piece of cheese over the hole by a string for bait. A mouse running across the shelves looking for something to tempt his appetite will discover the cheese and investigate the nature of the titbit placed so conspicuously before him. The next time you look in the jar you will probably find a surprised mouse just recovering from the jolt he received in making such a sudden descent into the pitfall.

Besides these simple traps there are the ordinary steel traps, used by all regular trappers, by means of which mink, beaver, otter, foxes, and other animals with valuable skins may be secured.

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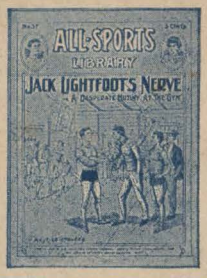
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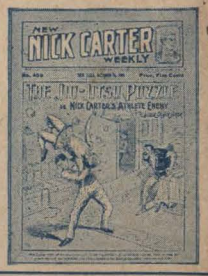
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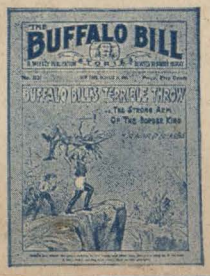
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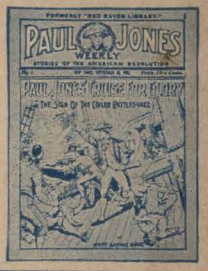
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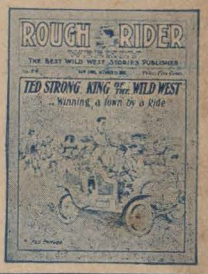
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